NATION

After days of violence, Manipur schools to reopen today

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BUSINESS

5 Adani firms trade higher; Adani Total soars nearly 19%

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SPORTS

Pakistan rejects hybrid model for CT

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SALAR

DIGITAL ENGLISH DAILY, BENGALURU

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K'taka clears bill to hike labour fund

The corpus fund of ₹80 cr is hiked to ₹200 cr

BENGALURU, 28 NOV

Karnataka Cabinet on Thursday approved the Karnataka Labour Welfare Fund (Amendment) Bill, which will increase the labour welfare corpus fund.

Once the bill is passed, the Labourer's share will be Rs 50, employer's share will be Rs 100 and and government's share will be Rs 50, Karnataka Law and Parliamentary Affairs Minister **HK Patil** briefed reporters after the state cabinet meeting.

The corpus fund used to get Rs 80 crore annually, which has increased to Rs 200 crore annually.

Besides, the Karnataka Groundwater Regulations and Control of Development and Management Amendment Bill was cleared today in the Cabinet.

PHOTO: PTI

The bill aims to monitor open borewells, which resulted in many accidents where children fall, get trapped and lose their lives. This bill makes the borewell drillers and the farm owners responsible for the accident, Patil said.

It has a provision of one year's imprisonment and Rs 10,000 fine in the event of accident. There is a provision of three months imprisonment and Rs 5,000 fine for being negligent towards the open borewells.

Another important bill that got the Cabinet's nod was the Karnataka State Rural Development and Panchayat Raj University Amendment Bill. "Till now the Governor was the Chancellor but with this amendment, the Chief Minister will be the Chancellor of Karnataka State Rural Development and Panchayat Raj University," Patil said. Cabinet on decided to upgrade 500 government schools as Karnataka Public Schools at an outlay of Rs 2,500 crore in four years. The government would borrow Rs 2,000 crore from the Asian Development Bank. This project will be taken up from July 2025 to June 2029. According to HK Patil, there are 308 Karnataka Public Schools functioning in 204 Taluks of the state. *—PTI*

CABINET DECIDES TO REOPEN GRAFT CASE AGAINST BSY

BENGALURU, 28 NOV

The Karnataka Cabinet on Thursday decided to reopen corruption and money laundering cases against former Chief Minister BS Yediyurappa, and other family members.

It decided to recommend to the Governor to revisit his decision of dismissing the plea to prosecute Yediyurappa in a corruption case.

There are allegations of corruption of Yediyurappa, Vijayendra, who is the BJP state president and Shikaripura MLA, and other relatives in the said case.

The matter pertains to the alleged corruption, cheating and money laundering in awarding contract related to the Bangalore Development Authority's residential complex project in Bidarahalli in Bengaluru, according to the cabinet note. "It has been alleged that Accused No. 7 demanded a bribe of Rs. 12 crores (on behalf of Accused No. 1 - Sri B.S. Yeddiyurappa) from Accused No. 5 (Ramalingam builder)," a cabinet note said. *—PTI*

M'rashtra CM impasse ends as Shinde, Fadnavis land in Delhi

MUMBAI, 28 NOV

Amid the speculation over the new Maharashtra Chief Minister, care taker Chief Minister Eknath Shinde, BJP leader Devendra Fadnavis, NCP's Ajit Pawar were scheduled to met Union minister Amit Shah in Delhi on Thursday night.

The meeting assumes significance amid reports that the BJP leadership may be mulling over names of a few of its Maratha leaders, despite the perception that Fadnavis becoming the chuef minister for a third time is a foregone conclusion, the sources said.

At the time of publishing, Shinde on met Shah alone in his Krishna Menon Marg residence, where BJP president JP Nadda was already present.

Caste dynamics have assumed a greater role in the choice of the chief minister as an overwhelming number of the 288 MLAs from all the parties are from the Maratha community.

Fadnavis is a Brahmin and first became the chief minister in 2014 and again for a brief while in 2019. "If the writ of RSS prevails, the chances of Fadnavis becoming the chief minister are bright," the sources said.

Devendra Fadnavis and Eknath Shinde PHOTO: PTI

Despite vociferous demands from Shiv Sena leaders that Shinde should have a go at another term at the top post, the caretaker CM on Wednesday made it clear that he has told PM Modi and Shah that he abide by the BJP's choice for the post.

A close aide of Shinde said on Thursday that the caretaker CM is unlikely to accept the post of deputy CM in the new dispensation.

Sanjay Shirsat, an MLA and spokesperson of the Shiv Sena, however, said Shinde would be a part of the cabinet.

Eknath s reportedly advocating for his son, Shrikant Shinde, to be appointed as Deputy Chief Minister.

Meanwhile, after tasting success in the Maharashtra elections, NCP Chief Ajit declared his party will contest the Delhi assembly elections in its bid to regain the national party status. Addressing a felicitation ceremony at the NCP's office in the national capital, he also dismissed the opposition allegations of misuse of EVMs in the Maharashtra elections. *—PTI*

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UGC introduces flexible study options for UGs

NEW DELHI, 28 NOV

The University Grants Commission (UGC) has approved new guidelines enabling Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) to offer undergraduate students the choice to shorten or extend their study durations. Announced by UGC Chairman Jagadesh Kumar, the Accelerated Degree Programme (ADP) and Extended Degree Programme (EDP) allow students to complete a standard three- or four-year degree in a reduced timeframe or extend it up to two semesters, respectively. Students will earn the same total credits as in traditional programmes, with degrees treated equally for academic and employment purposes. HEIs can allocate up to 10 per cent of their intake for ADP. *—PTI*

Bengaluru to host Aero India 2025 from 10-14 Feb

NEW DELHI, 28 NOV

The next edition of flagship air show 'Aero India' will take place at the Yelahanka Air Force Station in Bengaluru from 10-14 February, officials said on Thursday. Aero India is India's premier aerospace and defence exhibition where global aero vendors and the Indian Air Force enthral spectators with back-to-back aerobatic displays. *—PTI*

Every year same issue: SC raps states for farm fires

NEW DELHI, 28 NOV

In a recent ruling, the Supreme Court has criticised the Punjab and Haryana governments for their slow action against stubble burning, a significant contributor to air pollution in the Delhi-National Capital Region. A bench comprising Justices Abhay S Oka and Augustine George Masih emphasised the need for a comprehensive, long-term solution, stating, "Every year this problem cannot arise." Meanwhile, Delhi's air quality has deteriorated, with the Air Quality Index (AQI) recorded at 313 this morning, categorised as 'very poor.' *—PTI*

In RS, MEA urges B'desh to protect Hindus

NEW DELHI, 28 NOV

The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) of India on Thursday has expressed serious concerns in Rajya Sabha over spate of attacks on Hindu temples in Bangladesh, urging the Bangladeshi government to take immediate action to safeguard its minority communities.

Responding to a question in the upper house, Minister of State for External Affairs, Kirti Vardhan Singh, highlighted escalating incidents, such as the recent attack on a Pooja Mandap in Tantibazar, Dhaka, and the burglary at the Jeshoreshwari Kali temple during Durga Pooja 2024.

He reaffirmed India's position that the protection of life and liberty for all citizens, especially minorities, is the primary responsibility of the Bangladeshi government. The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) has also criticised Bangladeshi government

PHOTO: PTI

regarding the arrest and denial of bail for a religious leader named Das.

Haseena condemns arrest of Hindu monk

Sheikh Hasina, Bangladesh's ousted Prime Minister, condemned the arrest of Hindu spiritual monk Chinmoy Krishna Das on sedition charges, demanding his immediate release. She stressed the importance of ensuring religious freedom and the security of all citizens' lives and properties. *—PTI*

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WAQF BILL'S JPC TENURE EXTENDED TO BUDGET SESSION

NEW DELHI, 28 NOV

The Lok Sabha has adopted a resolution to extend the tenure of the Joint Parliamentary Committee on the Waqf (Amendment) Bill until the final day of the Budget session of Parliament next year. The resolution, moved by Committee Chairman and BJP leader Jagdambika Pal, was approved by voice vote.

The committee's deliberations have turned contentious, with fierce debates between opposition and ruling party members regarding the government's proposed amendments to the Waqf Bill. On Wednesday, opposition members staged a walkout in protest against Pal's assertion that the draft report was prepared, claiming they had been promised an extension of the committee's deadline, initially set for 29 November. *—PTI*

SWEARING-IN CEREMONY

SOREN, PRIYANKA'S NEW BEGINNINGS

Hemant Soren took the oath as Chief Minister of Jharkhand for the fourth time on Thursday in Ranchi

The event was marked by a show of strength from the INDIA bloc, with several key political leaders attending the swearing-in ceremony. Among those present were Karnataka's Deputy Chief Minister, JMM leader Kalpana Soren, Leader of Opposition Rahul Gandhi, Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge, West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee, AAP's Sunita Kejriwal, Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann, and former Delhi Chief Minister, representing AAP.

Holding up a copy of the Constitution, Congress leader Priyanka Gandhi Vadra took oath as Wayanad Lok Sabha MP. The debutant MP said her priority would be to raise important issues concerning the nation and fight for the country and her party. **PHOTOS: PTI**

>>>More on Page 3

AIMPLB FUMES OVER TEMPLE UNDER AJMER DARGAH PLEA

AJMER, 28 NOV

The All India Muslim Personal Law Board on Thursday expressed concern over the recent claims on mosques and dargahs in various courts in the country and urged Chief Justice of India Sanjiv Khanna to take suo motu action and direct the lower judiciary to refrain from opening doors to more disputes. This was after a plea in court claimed that the shrine of Sufi saint Khwaja Moinuddin Chishti was built over a Shiva temple widened on Thursday. Court issued notices to the dargah committee, the Ministry of Minority Affairs and the Archaeological Survey of India. *—PTI*

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CBI, INTERPOL TIE UP

LeT man, accused of terror acts in B'luru, extradited from Rwanda

NEW DELHI, 28 NOV

Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) in an operation with the NIA and Interpol has brought from Rwanda a member of Pakistan-based terror group Lashkar-e-Taiba who had an Interpol Red Notice against him for a terror offence in Bengaluru, officials said on Thursday.

Salman Rehman Khan, an alleged member of the internationally proscribed terrorist organisation, had assisted in providing arms, ammunition and explosives to further terrorist activities in Bengaluru, they said.

National Investigation Agency (NIA) had lodged a case in 2023 related to criminal conspiracy to spread terror in

Salman Rehman Khan

Bengaluru. An FIR was also registered in Hebbal Police Station. " CBI on request of the NIA had got a Red Notice issued against the subject from Interpol on 2 August, 2024," the statement said.

Khan was traced to Rwanda where CBI sought assistance from Interpol's National Central Bureau in Kigali, the capital and largest city of Rwanda.

The return of Khan comes soon after similar operations in coordination with Interpol wherein two accused -- one wanted by the CBI and another by the Kerala Police -- were brought back from Saudi Arabia.

Barkat Ali Khan, who had an Interpol Red Notice, was wanted in a 2012 case of rioting and use of explosive substances. He was brought back from Saudi Arabia on 14 November.

Raihan Arabikkalalarikkal, who also had an Interpol Red Notice against him and was wanted by police in Pattambi, Kerala for committing rape and sexual offences against a minor, was brought from Saudi Arabia on 10 November. *—PTI*

Delhi's Prashant Vihar sees 2nd blast in 2 months

NEW DELHI, 28 NOV

Residents of Prashant Vihar in Delhi's Rohini district experienced panic and fear on Thursday following a low-intensity explosion near the PVR cinema complex. This is the second blast occurred at the same spot in the recent past.

The blast occurred at approximately 11:48 AM, sending plumes of smoke toward the cinema, which is around 100 metres away, alarming families and movie-goers.

Eyewitness Ahmed Khan described the scene: "We were watching the film when suddenly there was a loud bang. Everyone was startled and confused." The explosion took place near a local sweet shop, resulting in minor injuries to the driver of a nearby parked three-wheeler.

The area, frequented by families, is on edge, especially in light of a previous blast near a CRPF school boundary wall on 20 October. Residents voiced their concerns, with Anuj Singh stating, "Two incidents in a few weeks—what is happening in our neighbourhood?"

Concerns were amplified by the fact that the incident occurred close to the Crime

Security investigate at the site after a blast was reported near a PVR at Prashant Vihar, in New Delhi on Thursday PHOTO: PTI

Branch of the Delhi Police. "This is the second blast here; those responsible must face strict punishment," asserted resident Rajesh Nath.

Amid lingering debris and a faint burnt smell, local authorities cordoned off the sweet shop entrance. A police officer suggested they initially thought it was a cylinder blast, while investigations, including bomb detection teams and dog squads, are currently underway. *—PTI*

NAVY TESTS K-4 NUKE MISSILE FROM INS ARIGHAAT

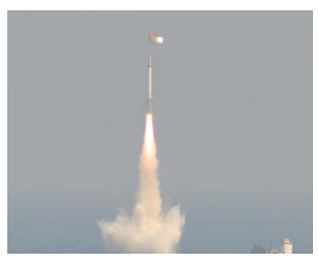
NEW DELHI, 28 NOV

The Indian Navy successfully conducted a test firing of the 3,500 km range K-4 ballistic missile from its newly inducted nuclear submarine, INS Arighaat, on Wednesday.

This test is a significant step in validating India's second-strike capability, a critical element of national security. The submarine, which was officially inducted in August at the Ship Building Centre in Vishakhapatnam, represents a substantial enhancement to India's strategic deterrence.

K-4 missile can also be launched from underwater platforms. The Indian Navy intends to carry out additional tests of the missile system in the near future.

Currently, the Indian Navy operates two nuclear submarines capable of launching ballistic missiles: INS Arihant and INS Arighaat. A third nuclear submarine is also in the pipeline, having been launched and anticipated to be inducted next year. *—ANI*



Electricity supply corp launches toll-free helpline

MYSURU, 28 NOV

Chamundeshwari Electricity Supply Corporation (CESC) on Thursday introduced a toll-free helpline facility, 1912, to address consumer complaints. The newly launched helpline is designed to cater to the needs of both farmers and the general public, enabling them to report issues related to electricity services. The facility will allow callers to lodge complaints concerning damaged electric poles, power transformer repairs, cut-off electric wires, and other electricity-related concerns.
—Salar News

PHOTO: X

Jail Chief Superintendent gets death threat

KALABURAGI, 28 NOV

Kalaburagi Jail Chief Superintendent R Anitha on Thursday said that an unknown person sent an audio message via a police inspector claiming that they will blow up her car. However, police said they have not received any complaints. Speaking to reporters here, Anitha said, "Somebody has sent an audio message to the police inspector saying that they will blow up my car." Last month, after Anitha took charge as the Chief Superintendent of Jail, raids were conducted and searches were intensified after photographs and video clips purportedly showing three inmates getting special treatment in the Kalaburagi Central prison went viral on social media. Following the raids, cell phones, gutka and cigarette packets and beedis were seized from the inmates.
—PTI

Mysuru DC to crack whip if welfare funds lapse

MYSURU, 28 NOV

Deputy Commissioner Lakshmikanth Reddy G on Thursday directed the officials of district and taluk administration to ensure effective use of funds sanctioned to various departments under the Special Component Plan (SCP) and Scheduled Tribe Sub Plan (STSP) for the empowerment of the scheduled cast and scheduled tribe (SC/ST) population. Chairing a district-level SCP/STSP funds progressive review meeting at Zilla Panchayat Hall in the city, the DC warned of strict action against officials of the departments concerned in case they fail to use these funds within the set deadline of March-end, and it returns to the government. Reddy directed the Public Works Department, which has started building concrete roads in all SC/ST-dominated areas, to complete the works on priority. The DC asked officials of Social Welfare Dept to complete by March-end the selection of advocates from SC/ST communities for the distribution of stipend for the 2024–25 to support their career. *—Salar News*

High Command to decide on changing KPCC Prez: HM

Cabinet reshuffle also on the cards, says Parameshwara

BENGALURU, 28 NOV

Home Minister G Parameshwara on Thursday said there are also talks regarding change in State Congress President along with the Cabinet reshuffle, and it is for the party leadership to decide on these matters.

Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar, who has completed four years as president of the Karnataka Pradesh Congress Committee (KPCC), is currently on an extension in the post.

"State Congress president (Shivakumar) has gone to Delhi... I have come to know that the Chief Minister (Siddaramaiah) is also going today (Thursday)," Parameshwara said.

While Siddaramaiah is leaving for the national capital this evening, Shivakumar is already there.

To a question on changing KPCC president, Parameshwara, who had earlier held the responsibility, said, he has only heard talks about it, but not sure it is at what stage.

Home Minister G Parameshwara said he has fulfilled responsibilities given to him by the Congress party for the last 35 years *PHOTO: PTI*

Parameshwara, in response to a question if his portfolio would be changed during the Cabinet reshuffle, said, it is for the high command to decide.

"So far, I have abided by the high command's decisions and fulfilled the responsibilities they have given to me for the last 35 years. I'm ready to continue to do that," he added.

Health Minister Dinesh Gundu Rao, too, said there are talks in some quarters about changing the party president as it is over five years since he took over responsibility.

- Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar, who has completed four years as president of the Karnataka Pradesh Congress Committee (KPCC), is currently on an extension in the post.

"Shivakumar has done a good job as the president and has brought it to power, and is working day and night. There is no second talk about it. But it has been over five years since he became the president and he has other responsibilities. We have no issues if he continues, but if we have a full-term president, there is nothing wrong. Let's see what they (leadership) decide," he told reporters. *—PTI*

'TAKE ACTION'

Sadananda to top brass: End division in BJP's State unit

BENGALURU, 28 NOV

Senior BJP leader DV Sadananda Gowda on Thursday expressed pain over factionalism in the State unit of his party and called it a "big tragedy".

The former Union minister also expressed displeasure over the party high command's delay in taking action, despite his letters and urged them to intervene and to act against those indulging in "indiscipline".

A group of leaders led by MLA Basanagouda Patil Yatnal, that include BJP MLA Ramesh Jarkiholi are critical of President BY Vijayendra and are even holding parallel agitations over the Waqf land issue, after staying away from protests held by the party.

Yatnal and Jarkiholi have been openly critical of Vijayendra, accusing him of indulging in "adjustment politics" with Congress and trying to keep the party in his clutches, along with his father and veteran leader BS Yediyurappa.

DV Sadananda Gowda *PHOTO: PTI*

Recalling that there was much stronger groupism in the party earlier between the factions led by stalwarts, who built the party in the state -- late Ananth Kumar and Yediyurappa, Gowda, who had also served as the state president in the past, said, "but the rift never came to the streets then."

"This is the first time the rift within the party has come to the streets. None of the self-styled senior leaders of are in a situation to set this right, while some are not even trying as it will benefit them," he added. *—PTI*

Lokayukta questions ex-MUDA chief

MYSURU, 28 NOV

Former Mysuru Urban Development Authority (MUDA) commissioner PS Kantharaj on Thursday told Lokayukta sleuths during his interrogation that the Board had decided to give the same extent of alternate land to Chief Minister Siddaramaiah'as wife Parvathi as compensation in 2017.

Speaking to reporters after the questioning, Kantharaj said he shared with Lokayukta SP TJ Udesha all information that he had about alleged scam involving the CM's family. The matter of providing alternate land to Parvati came up at a board meeting when he was the commissioner, but the idea was later dropped as it would burden MUDA's exchequer.

"I replied to all the questions asked by Lokayukta sleuths," Kantharaj said.

Kantharaju was the MUDA Commissioner between September 2017 and November 2019. It is alleged that compensatory sites were allotted to the CM's wife in an upmarket area in Mysuru, which had higher property value as compared to the location of her land which had been "acquired" by the MUDA.

PS Kantharaj *PHOTO: PTI*

The MUDA had allotted plots to Parvathi under a 50:50 ratio scheme in lieu of 3.16 acres of her land, where it developed a residential layout. It is alleged that Parvathi had no legal title over this 3.16 acres at survey number 464 of Kasare village, Kasaba Hobli of Mysuru taluk.
—Salar News and PTI

BMTC earns Rs 19L as fine from ticketless travel

BENGALURU, 28 NOV

The Bangalore Metropolitan Transport Corporation (BMTC) collected over Rs 19 lakh as a penalty from 10,069 passengers who were penalised for travelling without tickets and occupying seats exclusively reserved for ladies in the last three months, officials said on Thursday.

The checking staff of BMTC have intensified checking of buses operated in and around Bengaluru City to detect ticketless travelling by passengers, they said.

According to BMTC, during the months of August, September and October, the checking staff checked 57,219 trips and penalised 8,891 ticketless passengers by collecting Rs 17,96,030 as penalty and 5,268 cases were booked against conductors for their dereliction of duty. They have also penalised 1,178 male passengers for occupying seats exclusively reserved for lady passengers. *-PTI*

BOOSTING REVENUE

BMTC buses set to feature full-exterior advertisements

BENGALURU, 28 NOV

The Bengaluru Metropolitan Transport Corporation (BMTC) has unveiled a new strategy to wrap approximately 3,000 buses with full exterior advertisements as part of its efforts to enhance non-traffic revenue. This initiative comes in response to a significant decline in non-traffic income, which includes earnings from advertising and leasing, over the past two fiscal years.

In the fiscal year 2022-23, BMTC reported non-traffic revenue of around Rs 2,632 crore. However, this plummeted to approximately Rs 811 crore in 2023-24, reflecting a staggering 69 per cent decrease. Advertising revenue, which forms a part of this category, is a vital source of income for BMTC, alongside leasing revenues from bus-side ads and bus station spaces.

This initiative comes in response to a significant decline in non-traffic income over the past two fiscal years *PHOTO: X*

Historically, BMTC permitted advertisements solely on the rear sides of its buses but has now broadened its approach. The corporation will wrap non-air-conditioned buses with advertisements on all sides, excluding the front and rear windows. This notable pivot from the previous policy seeks to enhance the visibility of commercial messages. *—Salar News*

Nail artist allegedly dies by suicide

BENGALURU, 28 NOV

A 24-year-old nail artist from Delhi allegedly died by suicide in her rented accommodation in Bagalagunte, Bengaluru, on Thursday as reported by police. The deceased, identified as Sonia, had relocated to the city in search of employment and was working at a spa on Hesaraghatta Road.

Initial investigations suggest that Sonia may have taken her own life on Monday night. Her death went unnoticed until Thursday morning when her employer, worried about her absence from work, visited her residence after she failed to respond to calls for two days. Upon arrival, staff found the door locked from the inside, and with assistance from the landlord, they gained entry to find Sonia hanging in a room.

The police have yet to establish the precise reasons behind her actions. An officer informed **Salar News**, "We have notified her family in Delhi, and they are en route to Bengaluru. More information will emerge after we speak to them." Sources revealed that during a phone call with her mother on Monday night, Sonia voiced concerns regarding her job and the emotional strain of being away from her family. Following the investigation, her body was transported to Victoria Hospital for a post-mortem examination.
—Salar News

(Suicide is not the solution. Help is available. Please call Tele Manas at 14416, SAHAI at 080-25497777 for support.)

Newborn found dead in Harohalli hospital toilet

BENGALURU, 28 NOV

Staff at a private hospital in Harohalli discovered the lifeless body of a newborn in a toilet commode. The grim discovery occurred on Wednesday night when staff investigated a blockage in the commode located in the Radiology department. Initially, the cleaning crew suspected a routine obstruction but were horrified to find the deceased infant. Authorities believe the baby was only one or two days old at the time.

Ramanagara police have launched an investigation, and sending the body for post-mortem. *-PTI*

BHOVI SCAM: CCB SUMMONS CID OFFICIAL

The Central Crime Branch (CCB) has summoned CID official Deputy Superintendent of Police (DySP) Kanakalakshmi for questioning regarding an ongoing inquiry into a suspected scam at the Karnataka Bhovi Development Corporation. This development follows the heartbreaking suicide of 33-year-old entrepreneur Jeeva, who had been implicated in financial irregularities concerning the corporation and was under investigation by the Criminal Investigation Department (CID).

The High Court recently expressed its disapproval of the state government and police for their inaction, noting that no arrests or questioning of the accused had taken place, despite the recovery of a death note from Jeeva that accused DySP Kanakalakshmi of harassment.
—Salar News

MAN SHOT AT IN BELAGAVI, 3 ARRESTED

A 31-year-old man was shot at allegedly by the relatives of his love interest following a scuffle here, police said on Thursday. The incident happened in Mahantesh Nagar at around 8.30 pm on Wednesday, they said.

According to Police Commissioner Iada Martin Marbaniang, Praneeth Kumar, a medical sales representative and his love interest were discussing things at another friend's home over dinner, when the woman's relatives including her sister and brother came there and "a scuffle ensued between them and Kumar. One of the woman's relatives fired two rounds from a pistol, and a bullet hit Kumar," he said. *—PTI*

Molestation case filed against Cong leader Gurappa

BENGALURU, 28 NOV

A case of molestation and criminal intimidation was registered against the Congress Karnataka unit General Secretary Gurappa Naidu based on a complaint filed by a teacher, police said.

The 38-year-old complainant stated that she worked in BGS Bloomfield School in Bengaluru, where more than 75 women work. Naidu is the chairman of the school who "tormented her with his sexual advances", the woman alleged in her complaint. The crime occurred from 1 March, 2021 to 15 August, 2023, she alleged.

However, Gurappa Naidu dismissed the allegation terming it false and baseless.

Naidu dismissed the allegations saying that they were false and baseless. *—PTI*

'NAMMA JAATRE' IS BACK

500 folk dancers to liven up B'luru Habba

BENGALURU, 28 NOV

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah will inaugurate 'Namma Jaatre' on 30 November, a curtain-raiser to Bengaluru or BLR Habba, a City-wide, citizen-oriented cultural festival that will transform public spaces into cultural hubs, officials said.

Namma Jaatre, organised by the state government, which commences at Vidhana Soudha at 5pm on 30 November, will feature a performance by over 500 folk dancers from 50 diverse dance groups from across Karnataka.

During the event, Siddaramaiah will also flag off of a half-kilometre long procession, which will feature quintessential elements of Kannada culture and heritage.

A special highlight of this procession will be the tribute to State's eight Jnanpith Awardees, who will be honoured through flower-covered palanquins.

Namma Jaatre, organised by State government, commences at Vidhana Soudha at 5pm on 30 November *PHOTO: PTI*

The procession will wind its way through the heart of Bengaluru, concluding at MG Road where the celebration will continue at the Metro Rangoli Boulevard, with live performances of folk music and dance until 10 pm.

Audiences can book their favourite activities directly on the newly launched BLR Hubba website https://blrhubba.in. Most events under the BLR Habba banner are free and open to all.

One among them is a day-long literature festival that aims to mainstream books on the environment.

The 4th edition of GreenLitFest (GLF) will be held on 7 December at Cubbon Park's Century Club.

GLF 2024 will feature conversations on topics such as the Nilgiris, Rewilding, Climate Tech, India's Exquisite Trees, and India's opportunities with Green Transition and Entrepreneurship.
—PTI

Engage in healthy talks during Winter Session: Speaker

MANGALURU, 28 NOV

The Speaker of Karnataka Legislative Assembly UT Khader on Thursday urged both the ruling and Opposition parties to engage in healthy discussions during the Winter Session at Suvarna Vidhana Soudha in Belagavi.

He wanted the discussions to prioritise the welfare of the State, particularly of the people of North Karnataka.

The winter session is scheduled from December 9 to 19, and deliberations will focus on key state issues, particularly those affecting North Karnataka. The speaker added that decisions on the agenda will be finalised during the Business Advisory Committee (BAC) meeting at Suvarna Vidhana Soudha on 9 December. *— PTI*

City gets new waste management unit

CM Siddaramaiah at the inauguration of Secondary Larger Transfer station in Chamarajpet on Thursday *PHOTO: MOHAMMED ASAD*

BENGALURU, 28 NOV

To improve urban waste management, Chief Minister Siddaramaiah inaugurated a Secondary Larger Transfer (SLT) station and an Automated Waste Segregation Machine in Chalavadipalya, Chamarajpet on Thursday.

The station has a capacity of 150-200 tonnes per day and will reduce roadside waste dumping by directly transferring waste to sealed containers. This minimises leachate spills, enhances waste collection efficiency, and complies with Solid Waste Management Rules, 2016. *—Salar News*

Parl washed out by Oppn protest on Adani row

Oppn has been pressing for discussions on allegations of irregularities against the Adani Group and Sambhal row

NEW DELHI, 28 NOV

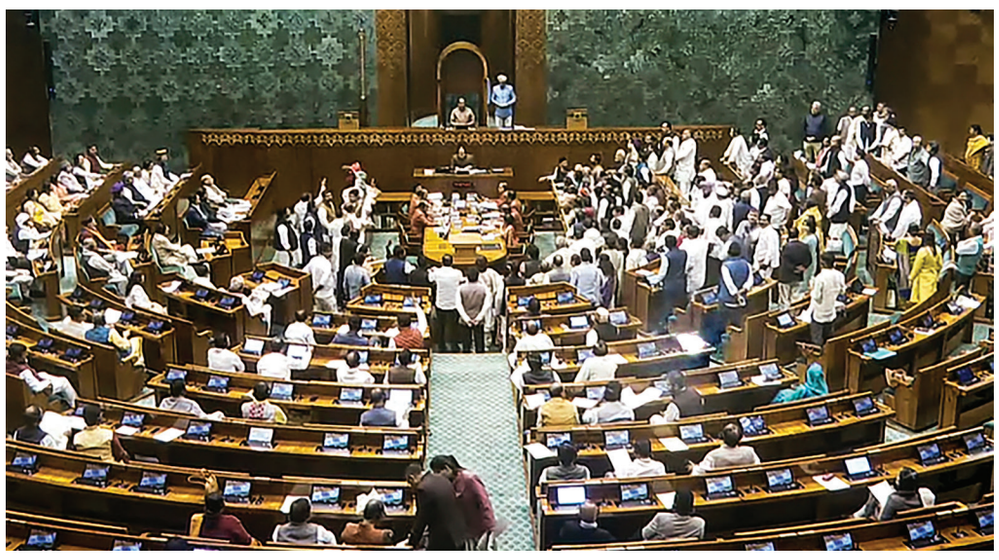
Proceedings in Parliament were on Thursday washed out for the third day since the beginning of the Winter Session following disruptions by the Opposition over the Adani issue and violence in Manipur and Sambhal.

Before being adjourned, the Lok Sabha adopted a resolution granting extension to the Joint Committee on the Waqf Amendment Bill till the last day of the Budget Session next year.

The Lok Sabha witnessed disruptions during Question Hour, shortly after Congress leaders Priyanka Gandhi Vadra and Ravindra Chavan took oath as members of the Lower House.

Opposition members gathered in the Well, raising slogans for action against the perpetrators of the violence in Sambhal during a court-ordered survey of a Mughal-era mosque.

As the Opposition protests continued, Telugu Desam Party (TDP) MP Krishna Prasad Tenneti, who was in the chair, adjourned the proceedings for the day.



Opposition members protest in the Lok Sabha during the Winter session of Parliament on Thursday **PHOTO: PTI**

In the Rajya Sabha, Chairman Jagdeep Dhankhar's appeals that disruption was not a remedy but a malady which weakened the foundation of India's democracy went unheeded as the opposition members protested.

The proceedings of the Upper House were adjourned within minutes after it met at 12 noon. The Upper House will reconvene at 11 am on Friday.

Dhankhar said he had received 16 notices for adjournment of scheduled business under Rule 267 of the House.The chairman said he was rejecting all the notices. *—PTI*

> **It is unfortunate that the Opposition keeps defaming the country whether at home or abroad, and also does not even let the Parliament function**
>
> -Piyush Goyal, Union Minister

'1.12cr grievances redressed in 5 yrs'

More than 1.12 crore public grievances were redressed in the last five years, Union Minister Jitendra Singh said on Thursday. These complaints were raised on the Centralised Public Grievance Redress and Monitoring System (CPGRAMS) portal -- pgportal.gov.in. The average resolution time have come down from 28 days in 2019 to 13 days in 2024.

'Earned ₹1.44L cr in toll since 2000'

The government has collected Rs 1.44 lakh crore as toll tax at fee plazas presently operational under Public Private Partnerships model on National Highways(NH) since December 2000, Parliament was informed on Thursday. Union Minister Nitin Gadkari said all user fee plazas on NHs are established as per the provision of NH Fee Rules, 2008

38.9% Anganwadi kids stunted

Over a third of children under five years of age enrolled in anganwadis across India are stunted, the government has told the Rajya Sabha. In response to a question in Rajya Sabha, Women and Child Development (WCD) Minister of State Savitri Thakur said 7.54 crore children up to five years of age are enrolled in anganwadis and registered on the Poshan Tracker. Of these, 7.31 crore were measured for growth parameters, and findings show that 38.9 per cent of children are stunted, 17 per cent are underweight, and 5.2 per cent are wasted. Of the 16.1 crore projected population of children up to six years in 2021, 8.82 crore are enrolled in anganwadis. *—PTI*

My name not linked to Adani row, says Jagan

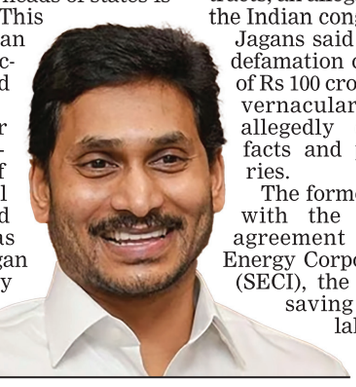
AMARAVATI, 28 NOV

- Adani Group chairman Gautam Adani has been charged by the US Department of Justice over his role in a years-long scheme to pay USD 250 million bribe to Indian officials in exchange for favourable solar power contracts

YSRCP top leader YS Jagan Mohan Reddy on Thursday strongly refuted allegations of payment of bribes to Andhra Pradesh officials by the Adani Group for solar power purchases during his party-led government, and said his name was not mentioned anywhere in a US court's indictment on the matter.

In his first reaction days after the controversy broke out, Reddy also said he had met the Adanis several times during his tenure which was "not unusual".

"Nowhere it mentions that incentives were offered to me because there is no way anybody can offer incentives to me, first of all. And businessmen meeting heads of states is not unusual. This in fact is an ordinary practice," he told reporters.



He further said the allegations of bribes are all hearsay and nobody has said that Jagan or somebody has taken bribes.

Adani Group chairman Gautam Adani has been charged by the US Department of Justice over his role in a years-long scheme to pay USD 250 million bribe to Indian officials in exchange for favourable solar power contracts, an allegation refuted by the Indian conglomerate.

Jagans said he would file a defamation case to the tune of Rs 100 crore against some vernacular dailies for allegedly distorting the facts and publishing stories.

The former CM said that with the power supply agreement with Solar Energy Corporation of India (SECI), the state would be saving over Rs one lakh crore over 25 years. *—PTI*

Kejri attacks Centre over law and order in Delhi

NEW DELHI, 28 NOV

AAP supremo Arvind Kejriwal on Thursday intensified his criticism of the BJP-led central government, accusing it of failing to ensure law and order in Delhi. Addressing a press conference at party office, Kejriwal said, "There is an atmosphere of fear and insecurity everywhere in Delhi. Women feel unsafe stepping out after 7pm and parents worry about their daughters going outside." He further alleged that incidents of extortion, shootings and public crimes have become alarmingly common under the watch of Union Home Minister Amit Shah. "The BJP and the Home Ministry have turned Delhi into a hub of extortion and violence," Kejriwal charged. *—PTI*

Farmers plan to gherao Mann's office on 1 Dec

CHANDIGARH, 28 NOV

Agitated over the forcible removal of farmer leader Jagjit Singh Dallewal from the protest site at Khanauri border point, protesting farmers on Thursday announced to 'gherao' the residence of Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann in Sangrur on 1 December. Sharpening their attack against the Aam Aadmi Part over the Dallewal issue, they called the party "B team" of the BJP-led Centre and also accused it of "backstabbing" them. Dallewal, who was to sit on a fast unto death on 26 November was forcibly removed from the Khanauri border point and was taken to a Ludhiana hospital. *—PTI*

RJD MLA threatens to occupy CM's seat in Bihar Assembly

PATNA, 28 NOV

Tensions flared in Bihar Assembly on Thursday when an opposition MLA threatened to sit in the seat reserved for the Chief Minister, sparking outrage from the chair. The incident prompted Speaker Nand Kishor Yadav to call the marshals and warn the RJD legislator with eviction, before adjourning the proceedings till 2pm. Trouble started when Nitish left Senior RJD leader Alok Mehta rose in his chair over rebel MLAs of his party occupying seats on the ruling side. "There should be proper seating arrangements. If people take their seats at will, it would lead to chaos," Mehta said. *—PTI*

ISKCON monks take part in a protest 'kirtan' over the arrest of Hindu monk by Bangladesh police, in Kolkata, West Bengal, on Thursday **PHOTO: PTI**

Can't interfere in B'desh's affair: Didi

KOLKATA, 28 NOV

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Thursday expressed concern over the current situation in neighbouring Bangladesh but emphasised that she preferred not to comment on the matter, as it pertains to another country.

Speaking in the assembly, Banerjee clarified that the issue was for the central government to address, and her state government would abide by its decision.

"Bangladesh is a different country. The government of India will look into it. It does not come under our jurisdiction. We are not supposed to talk about it or interfere. While we feel sorry inside, we follow the policies set by the Centre," Banerjee said.

Meanwhile, the Shiv Sena staged protests in Jammu against violent attacks on Hindus and temples in Bangladesh, and demanded Prime Minister Narendra Modi's intervention to ensure the safety of minorities in the neighbouring country.

Jammu and Kashmir Shiv Sena (Balasaheb Thackeray) chief Manish Sahani, along with several sadhus, led scores of workers in protesting the barbaric acts against Hindus and temples in Bangladesh.

The protesters raised slogans against Bangladesh and burned an effigy of the country as well as its flag.

The opposition CPI(M) in Tripura appealed to secular-minded forces in Bangladesh to raise their voices against the alleged attacks. *—PTI*

> **Bangladesh is a different country. Centre will look into it. It does not come under our jurisdiction. We are not supposed to talk about it or interfere**
>
> -Mamata Banerjee, WB CM

Shrikant Shinde praises dad for alliance dharma

MUMBAI, 28 NOV

Shiv Sena MP Shrikant Shinde has expressed pride in his father, Eknath Shinde, the caretaker chief minister of Maharashtra, for exemplifying "alliance dharma" by prioritising collective governance over personal ambition.

In a post on X Wednesday, Shrikant Shinde highlighted his father's deep connection with the people of Maharashtra, emphasising his relentless dedication to serving all segments of society.

Shrikant Shinde **PHOTO: PTI**

His remark follows Eknath Shinde's announcement that the Shiv Sena would support the decisions of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union Home Minister Amit Shah regarding the selection of the next chief minister, facilitating formation of new government likely to be headed by the BJP.

The blessings of the poor are Eknath Shinde's wealth, he added.

The BJP-led ruling Mahayuti alliance in the state achieved a stunning victory in the November 20 polls to the 288-member state assembly. With Shinde declaring the Shiv Sena would not be a hurdle in the formation of new government, two-time BJP chief minister Devendra Fadnavis, one of the architects of the Mahayuti's grand win in the polls, is emerging as a front-runner for the top post. *—PTI*

THACKERAY CLAN BLAMES CONG'S OVERCONFIDENCE FOR DEFEAT

MUMBAI, 28 NOV

Fissures emerged in the opposition Maha Vikas Aghadi after the drubbing it received in the Maharashtra assembly polls, with Shiv Sena (UBT) leader Ambadas Danve on Thursday saying the Congress got over confident after the Lok Sabha elections.

Danve, the Leader of Opposition in the state legislative council, also claimed some Congress leaders started deliberating on portfolios even before winning the polls, while "ten leaders were keen on becoming chief minister".

Talking to reporters, Danve said had Uddhav Thackeray been the chief ministerial face of the Maha Vikas Aghadi, 2-5 per cent votes would have swung in its favour.

Public opinion was in favour of Thackeray due to the work done by him as chief minister from 2019 to 2022, Danve asserted.

According Sena leaders, if Uddhav Thackeray was the CM face of the MVA , 2-5 per cent votes would have swung in its favour **PHOTO: PTI**

"The Congress got over confident after the Lok Sabha polls. The situation was favourable for the Congress in Jammu Kashmir, Maharashtra and Haryana. In Jharkhand, the JMM did a lot on its own strength," Danve said.

"Congress leaders were deliberating on portfolios even before winning the polls and this is a fact. Ten leaders were keen on becoming the CM," said Danve.

The Maha Vikas Aghadi won 30 of the 48 Lok Sabha seats in Maharashtra. However, it won only 49 of the 288 seats in the November 20 state polls, results of which were declared on 23 November. *—PTI*

'EC must clarify 7% extra turnout'

Maharashtra Congress president Nana Patole on Thursday demanded that the ECI clarify the rise in voter turnout by over 7 per cent after polling for the assembly elections ended on 20 November vening. Patole claimed that the voting percentage was 58.22 at 5 pm but rose by 7.83 per cent points at 11.30pm and asked ECI to clarify this "discrepancy". *—PTI*

NEW RESPONSIBILITIES

All Gandhis in the house now

NEW DELHI, 28 NOV

Holding up a copy of the Constitution in her hand, Congress leader Priyanka Gandhi Vadra on Thursday took oath as a Lok Sabha member to begin her journey as an elected representative of the people five years after she joined active politics. Priyanka reminded many of her grandmother, Indira Gandhi, who often wore similar traditional sarees in Parliament. She said her priority would be to raise important issues concerning the nation and fight for the country and her party.

The 52-year-old, who joins her mother Sonia and brother Rahul as an MP in what is a rare instance of three members of a family together in Parliament. Priyanka rose to take oath amid cheers of "jodo jodo, bharat jodo" from e Congress benches. She took oath with her mother Sonia, husband Robert, son Raihan and daughter Miraya watching from the galleries. *—PTI*

Congress party leader Sonia Gandhi with party leader Rahul Gandhi and Wayanad MP Priyanka Gandhi Vadra, who was dressed Kerala's favourite Kasavu saree in New Delhi **PHOTO: PTI**

Soren sworn in as J'khand CM

RANCHI, 28 NOV

JMM leader Hemant Soren was sworn in as the 14th chief minister of Jharkhand in a grand ceremony here on Thursday in the presence of top leaders of the INDIA bloc, including Mallikarjun Kharge and Rahul Gandhi of the Congress and Mamata Banerjee of the TMC.

Governor Santosh Kumar Gangwar administered the oath of office and secrecy to the 49-year-old tribal who reaffirmed his commitment to working for the welfare of all sections, particularly the poor, deprived, and exploited.

"This Jharkhand government will work day and night for all sections of people of Jharkhand including the poor, deprived and exploited... Abua (our) government," Soren said shortly after taking oath.

In a post on X, he said, "Today's historic occasion is dedicated to the struggle of the immortal brave martyrs, great revolutionaries of Jharkhand... Today's emotional moment is dedicated to crores of people of Jharkhand."

JMM leader Hemant Soren sworn in as Jharkhand Chief Minister on Thursday in Ranchi, Jharkhand **PHOTO: PTI**

Tribal troupes in traditional attire performed dances to the rhythm of 'dhol and nagara' at the venue, adding to the festive atmosphere. Schools in the state capital remained closed for the occasion.

A statement issued by the Soren's Secretariat said eight crucial decisions were taken at the "cabinet meeting" though no minister took oath during the day. *—PTI*

Woman detained for threatening to harm Modi

MUMBAI, 28 NOV

A 34-year-old mentally unstable woman has been detained for allegedly making a call to Mumbai Police threatening to harm Prime Minister Narendra Modi, officials said on Thursday. The city police control room received the threat call on Wednesday, an official said. It was traced to Amboli in the western suburbs, and a case was subsequently registered. A Mumbai Police team tracked the woman caller and took her into custody for questioning, the official said. After an investigation, the woman was found to be mentally unstable and the call was classified as a "prank", he said. The woman did not have any previous criminal record, the official said, adding that an investigation was on, he said. —*PTI*

NFR officer's body recovered from Arunachal River

ITANAGAR, 28 NOV

The body of the chief principal security officer of Northeast Frontier Railway (NFR), Suvendu Choudhary, was recovered from Lohit River in Arunachal Pradesh on Wednesday evening, four days after he was swept away, officials said."The body was found around 8km downstream from where he was swept away at Parashuram Kund, a Hindu pilgrimage site in Lohit district, on Sunday," said NFR chief public relations officer Kapinjal Kishore Sharma on Thursday."Choudhary visited Parashuram Kund with his family and NFR officials. He slipped and fell into the river and was carried away by the strong currents," the official said. —*PTI*

School head shot at by teacher in J'khand classroom

DEOGHAR, 28 NOV

The headmistress of a government school in Jharkhand's Deoghar district was shot at by a teacher in front of students inside a classroom on Thursday, police said. The incident took place at an upgraded middle school under Mohanpur police station area, they said. Deoghar SP Ambar Lakra said Chandni Kumari sustained a bullet wound in her hand. She is undergoing treatment at Deoghar Sadar hospital and her condition is stable, doctors said. The accused assistant-teacher Shailesh Yadav, who absconded after committing the crime, was arrested from a nearby forest, the SP said. According to Kumari, the incident took place when she was teaching in the classroom."Yadav entered the classroom with a gun and fired at her," they said. —*PTI*

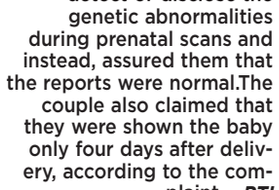


PHOTO: PTI

4 docs booked for birth of baby with genetic disorders

ALAPPUZHA, 28 NOV

Four doctors in Kerala have been booked for allegedly failing to detect genetic disorders in a newborn while it was still in the mother's womb, the police said on Thursday. The accused include two female doctors attached to the Kadappuram Government Women and Child Hospital in Alappuzha, along with two doctors from private diagnostic labs, said Alappuzha South police. The police registered an FIR on Tuesday based on a complaint lodged by the newborn's parents, Anish and Surumi, a couple from Alappuzha. They alleged that the doctors failed to detect or disclose the genetic abnormalities during prenatal scans and instead, assured them that the reports were normal.The couple also claimed that they were shown the baby only four days after delivery, according to the complaint —*PTI*

Ajmer Dargah a temple? Oppn & BJP fight gets ugly

Dargah body says Right-wingers trying to 'isolate' Muslims

AJMER/ NEW DELHI, 28 NOV

A body representing the 'Khadims' of the Ajmer dargah condemned a court plea seeking to declare the shrine of Khawaja Gharib Nawaz as a temple, saying Right-wing forces were trying to "isolate" Muslims and "disrupt" communal harmony.

Syed Sarwar Chishti, secretary of the Anjuman Syed Zadgan, a body representing the khadims (caretakers), described the petition as an attempt to fracture society along communal lines.

He said the dargah comes under the Minority Affairs ministry and the Archaeological Survey of India has nothing to do with it.

"Muslims accepted the Babri Masjid case and believed nothing will happen after that but such things are happening again. The example of Sambhal is in front of us. This must stop," he told PTI.

The plea seeking directions to start worship in the temple was filed in September and the next hearing is on 20 December.

"Our demand was that the Ajmer dargah be declared a Sankat Mochan Mahadev Temple and the dargah's registration should be cancelled. Its survey should be done through ASI and Hindus should worship there," plaintiff Vishnu Gupta told reporters.

He claimed he had conducted research for two years and found that there was a Shiva temple, which was destroyed by Muslim invaders.

A court plea claims Dargah to be a temple PHOTO: PTI

As debate – and concerns – escalated, Union minister Giriraj Singh wondered why.

"A court has ordered survey in Ajmer. What is the problem if court has ordered a survey? This is a truth that when Mughals came to India, they demolished our temples. If Jawaharlal Nehru would have stopped it in 1947 itself, there would have been no need to approach the court today," he said.

Muzaffar Bharti, President of the United Muslim Forum Rajasthan (UMFR), contended that the petition was a "sheer violation" of the Places of Worship Act 1991. He also noted that Prime Minister Narendra Modi offers a 'chadar' at the dargah during the annual Urs, a tradition started by Jawaharlal Nehru.

AIMIM MP Asaduddin Owaisi agreed.

"The Dargah Sharif has been in Ajmer for 800 years. Where will all this stop? What will happen to Place of Worship Act 1991? This is being done to destabilise the country."

PDP chief Mehbooba Mufti also cited the act.

"Thanks to a former chief justice of India a pandora's box has been opened sparking a contentious debate about minority religious places. Despite a Supreme Court ruling that the status quo should be maintained as it existed in 1947, his judgement has paved the way for surveys of these sites potentially leading to increased tension between Hindus and Muslims," she said.

She was referring to an order by a bench led by then CJI D Y Chandrachud allowing the ASI to conduct a scientific survey of the Gyanvapi mosque in Varanasi to determine if it was built on a pre-existing temple. —*PTI*

> **Worrisome. The latest claim: Shiv Temple at Ajmer Dargah. Where are we taking this country? And why? For political dividends!**
>
> -Kapil Sibal, Rajya Sabha MP

Uttarkashi tense over mosque controversy

The Uttarakhand High Court has directed the Uttarkashi district administration to maintain law and order in the town and keep it informed on the situation after a dispute over a local mosque came to light.A division bench comprising Acting Chief Justice Manoj Kumar Tiwari and Justice Vivek Bharti issued the directions on 27 November, while hearing a petition demanding safety of the mosque on Bhatwari Road in Uttarkashi. The mosque, built decades ago, belongs to the Sunni community.

ANOTHER COPYCAT MURDER

Man butchers live-in partner into 50 parts in J'khand

RANCHI, 28 NOV

A 25-year-old man, who works as a butcher, allegedly strangled to death his live-in partner and chopped her body into 40–50 pieces in a forested area in Jharkhand's Khunti district, police said.

The accused, identified as **Naresh Bhengra**, has been arrested. The matter came to light almost a fortnight after the killing, when a stray dog was found with human body parts near Jordag village in Jariagarh police station area on 24 November.

Bhengra was in a live-in relationship with the deceased, a 24-year-old woman from the same district, in Tamil Nadu for the past couple of years. Sometime back, he returned to Jharkhand and married another woman without telling his live-in partner. After the marriage, he went back to the southern state without his wife and continued living with the women.

"The incident occurred on 8 November. The accused took the woman to a forest near his house at Jordag village in Jariagarh police station. After killing her, he cut the body into pieces. The man has been arrested," Khunti SP Aman Kumar said on Wednesday.

Inspector Ashok Singh, who investigated the case, said the woman was unaware of his marriage and pressurised him to take her to Khunti. After reaching Ranchi, they headed to the man's village.

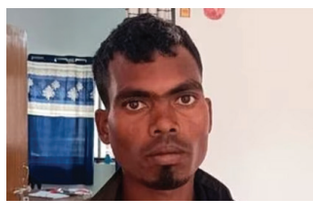


PHOTO: PTI

- A 25-year-old man, who works as a butcher, allegedly strangled to death his live-in partner and chopped her body into 40–50 pieces in a forested area in Jharkhand's Khunti district, police said.

"The man took her to a place near his home and asked her to wait. He returned with sharp weapons and strangulated her with a dupatta after raping her. He has admitted chopping the body of the woman into 40 to 50 pieces and leaving them in the forest, expecting to be consumed by wild animals. The police recovered several body parts on 24 November after a dog in the area was seen with a mutilated human hand," Singh said.

The police also found a bag in the forest, which contained the victim's belongings including her Aadhaar card. —*PTI*

Cyber fraudsters dupe senior citizens of ₹15 cr in M'rashtra

MUMBAI, 28 NOV

A 74-year-old retired bank employee and a 75-year-old retired ship captain lost a total of Rs 14.73 crore in two separate cases of cyber fraud in Maharashtra, police said.

In one incident, the retired bank employee in Maharashtra's Thane district was duped of Rs 3.57 crore by a conman posing as a policeman on a video call, an official at the Central police station said on Thursday. The victim, a resident of Ulhasnagar area, recently received a WhatsApp video call from a person claiming to be a policeman.

The imposter allegedly threatened him and made him transfer Rs 3.57 crore into different bank accounts, the official said. The FIR did not specify what threats were issued to the victim.

In the other incident, the former ship captain was lured with promises of hefty returns on investments in stocks. When he attempted to withdraw his earnings, he was told to pay a 20 per cent "service tax fee". "Between August and November this year, he was duped of Rs 11.16 crore," a police officer said on Wednesday.

Police have arrested one Kaif Ibrahim Mansuri in connection with the case and recovered 33 debit cards and 12 cheque books of different banks, a police officer said. —*PTI*

Cyclonic storm to cross north Tamil Nadu, warns IMD

CHENNAI, 28 NOV

The deep depression over the Southwest Bay of Bengal remained practically stationary about 100 km east-northeast of Trincomalee, and it will intensify into a cyclonic storm in the next 12 hours, the Regional Meteorological Centre, Chennai, said on Thursday.

It would move towards nearly north–northwest, skirting Sri Lanka coast and intensify into a cyclonic storm during the next 12 hours, the RMC said in its latest bulletin. "To cross the north Tamil Nadu-Puducherry coasts between Karaikal and Mahabalipuram around November 30 morning, as a deep depression with a wind speed of 50–60 kph gusting to 70 kph," it said.

Tamil Nadu and Puducherry braced for heavy rain with the possibility of Cyclone Fengal crossing Chennai coasts. National Disaster Response Force team inspected the vulnerable and low-lying areas in TR Patinam, Karaikal, focussing on risk assessment. —*PTI*

AMID PROHIBITORY ORDERS

After days of violence, Manipur schools to reopen on Friday

IMPHAL, 28 NOV

The Manipur government on Thursday announced that classes in schools and colleges in Imphal Valley districts and Jiribam would resume from 28 November after 13 days.

Educational institutes in these districts have remained closed since 16 November after the dead bodies of three women and three children in Jiribam were recovered from the Jiri and Barak rivers in Manipur and Assam, respectively.

An order issued by the Directorate of Education–Schools said, "Normal classes will resume for all schools of the state – government, government aided, private and central schools – from 29 November."

The government educational institutions or government-aided colleges under the Higher and Technical Education Department, including state universities, will resume classes with effect from Friday, a separate order said.

Police and security personnel during a search operation in the fringe and vulnerable areas of hill and valley districts of Manipur PHOTO: PTI

Violence escalated in Manipur after three women and three children belonging to the Meitei community had gone missing from a relief camp in Jiribam after a gunfight between security forces and suspected Kuki-Zo militants resulted in the deaths of 10 insurgents on 11 November. Bodies of those six were later found.

Prohibitory orders have been in place till Thursday in the Imphal Valley districts and Jiribam, another official said. "It is not clear as of now whether curfew will be relaxed from Friday or will continue. No fresh order has been issued so far," he said. —*PTI*

SC RAPS HP GOVT FOR DENYING JOB TO 2014 ASIAN GAMES GOLD WINNER

NEW DELHI, 28 NOV

The Supreme Court on Thursday criticised the Himachal government for allegedly denying employment to a 2014 Asian Games gold medallist under the sports quota.

A bench of Justices Abhay S Oka and Augustine George Masih took exception of the fact that Pooja Thakur, said, "This is how you encourage sports persons? Somebody won a gold medal in the Asian games of 2014. Your chief minister should have a pragmatic approach... This is the approach of the state while dealing with the sports persons." The court dismissed the appeal filed by the government against the appointment to excise and taxation officer effective the date of her application to the CM in 2015. —*PTI*

Now, Bikaner royal family quarrels over land

JAIPUR, 28 NOV

Close on the heels of a dispute of the erstwhile royal family of Udaipur in Rajasthan, another one has surfaced in Bikaner. Earlier this week, dispute in the erstwhile royal family of Mewar and descendants of glorious Rajput king Maharana Pratap took place when Vishvaraj Singh, new titular head of Mewar, was not allowed to enter the city palace to have 'darshan' of a religious place after his coronation ceremony following his father Mahendra Singh Mewar's death.

Two separate FIRs were registered in Bichwal police station of Bikaner on Tuesday. One FIR was lodged against BJP MLA from Bikaner East Siddhi Kumari by the company that runs Laxmi Niwas Palace hotel on lease.

The second FIR was filed against Siddhi Kumari's aunt Rajyashree Kumari by the treasurer of four trusts whose chairperson is Siddhi Kumari. There is a property-related dispute between international shooter Rajyashree Kumari, who is the daughter of erstwhile ruler of Bikaner Karni Singh, and her niece Siddhi Kumari, who is Karni Singh's granddaughter and Narendra Singh's daughter. Both are claiming their rights over the trusts.

Siddhi Kumari PHOTO: PTI

Siddhi Kumari was booked in an FIR by Rajiv Mishra of a company which runs Laxmi Niwas Palace hotel.

Mishra alleged that Siddhi Kumari is creating obstacles in running the hotel. Siddhi Kumari's late father Narendra Singh had signed three lease deeds of 19 years each with the company in 1999. Mishra alleged Siddhi Kumari and her sister Mahima Kumari extorted Rs 4 crore by threatening to cancel the lease. Mishra said obstacles were created by Siddhi Kumari and Mahima Kumari in the operations of the hotel. He accused the two sisters of demanding Rs 10 crore now. —*PTI*

CONSTITUTIONAL RIGHT

Army to pay 46 yrs of rent to owner

SRINAGAR, 28 NOV

The High Court of Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh has held that the right to property now falls within the realm of human rights.

Disposing of a petition on 20 November, Justice Wasim Sadiq Nargal directed the Army, which had occupied the parcel of the petitioner's land since 1978, to pay the rent accumulated over the last 46 years within a month.

"The right to property is now considered not only a constitutional or statutory right, but it falls within the realm of human rights. Human rights have been considered in the realm of individual rights such as right to shelter, livelihood, health, employment, etc. and over the years, human rights have gained a multifaceted dimension," the judge said.

Army had occupied 1.6 acres near LoC in Kupwara PHOTO: PTI

The petition filed by Abdul Majeed Lone in 2014 stated that the Army occupied his land measuring 1.6 acre at Tangdhar near the LoC in Kupwara district in 1978. He alleged he had not received any compensation or the rent for his land.

"The state in exercise of its power of 'eminent domain' may interfere with the right of property of a person by acquiring the same, but the same must be for a public purpose, and therefore, reasonable compensation must be paid," the court held.

While the Centre's counsel contended that the Army had not occupied the land, the revenue department confirmed it had been in the possession of the Army since 1978. The court ordered a fresh survey and found that it had been in the Army's possession since 1978 —*PTI*

Delhi reports 'isolated' Japanese Encephalitis case

NEW DELHI, 28 NOV

All public health measures have been initiated as per the National Centre for Vector Borne Diseases Control (NCVBDC) guidelines after the national capital has reported an "isolated" case of Japanese Encephalitis, sources said on Thursday.

The sources said there was no cause for concern.

Referring to an order by Municipal Corporation of Delhi, the sources said that the 72-year-old man from west Delhi was admitted to the All India Institute of Medical Sciences on 3 November following chest pain.

The patient was diabetic, had coronary artery disease, bilateral lower limb weakness and bowel and bladder incontinence, the source said.

After the patient's blood sample was collected on 6 November, he tested positive for Japanese Encephalitis. He was discharged on 15 November, the sources said.

According to the Integrated Disease Surveillance Programme data, in 2024, 1,548 Japanese Encephalitis cases were reported across the country, 925 of which were from Assam alone. —*PTI*

LIFE AFTER DEATH

Sangrur resident Manpreet Singh with the life-size statue of his mother, who passed away in January. The statue is made by Moga-based sculptor Iqbal Singh. He said he was getting orders from several families in Punjab and outside to make statues of their departed loved ones. Each statue costs Rs 90,000 to Rs 1.50 lakh
PHOTO: PTI

What's next for Pak's PTI after protest setback?

When a convoy of thousands of supporters of the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) party arrived in Islamabad on Monday night to rally behind their imprisoned leader, former Prime Minister Imran Khan, they were urged by Khan's wife, Bushra Bibi, to stay until his release was secured.

However, within 24 hours, a late night raid by security forces on Tuesday dispersed the crowd, reportedly resulting in casualties among both PTI protesters and law enforcement personnel.

The operation, which began just before midnight, was conducted under a power blackout in central Islamabad, less than 3km from D-Chowk, the public square marking the boundary of the capital's Red Zone, where many government buildings are located.

Bushra Bibi and Ali Amin Gandapur, the PTI chief minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, retreated to the northwestern province under the cover of darkness as the operation commenced and security forces used tear gas to disperse the crowd. By Wednesday morning, PTI issued a statement announcing it was calling off the protest "for the time being".

The PTI convoys had moved from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa into Islamabad, defying court orders banning their entry into the city, to pressure the government on three demands: reclaiming what the party calls its "stolen mandate" from the February elections, the release of political prisoners including Khan and the reversal of a constitutional amendment granting the government control over judicial appointments.

By the time the protesters left, it was the PTI's leadership that was under pressure, analysts said. None of the party's demands had been met, and there was little clarity on how the organisation would regroup.

"This protest was framed as their 'final call', but for it to collapse like this is a major blow to their political strategy," political analyst Zaigham Khan told Al Jazeera.

The PTI said eight of its supporters were killed while the government denied using live ammunition and insisted no protesters died
PHOTO: X

The PTI said eight of its supporters were killed while the government denied using live ammunition and insisted no protesters died. Officials reported that three rangers were killed in a hit-and-run incident involving a PTI convoy on Monday while a police constable died in clashes with party supporters.

This was the PTI's fourth protest in four months with previous rallies, including one in October, ending prematurely.On Wednesday afternoon, Gandapur held a news conference in Mansehra city of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, condemning the government's crackdown on PTI workers and indicating that the party would continue to press its demands.

The PTI has been in protest mode since Imran Khan's government was ousted through a parliamentary vote of no confidence in April 2022.

Although its candidates won the most seats in February's elections, the party failed to form a government and claimed its mandate had been stolen.

Imran Khan has been in jail since August 2023 and faces numerous charges, including corruption and treason. Bushra Bibi was also imprisoned for nine months on corruption charges before securing bail in October.

Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi blamed Bushra Bibi for orchestrating the unrest in Islamabad. "The loss of life and economic damage over the past few days lies squarely on her shoulders," Naqvi said on Tuesday.

PTI leader Sayed Zulfi Bukhari declined to comment on the party's next steps, saying it was focused on dealing with casualties.

But Benazir Shah, a Lahore-based political analyst, said that at the moment, launching yet another large-scale protest for Imran Khan's release seems out of the question for the PTI.

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif spokesperson Rana Ihsaan Afzal rejected accusations of excessive force, accusing PTI supporters of carrying weapons.

"We have policemen with bullet wounds, which indicates the protesters were armed," Afzal said. He added that the government had repeatedly offered alternative protest sites but the PTI violated Islamabad High Court orders by holding a rally in the city."This was not a peaceful protest. They wanted violence and used it as a tactic to gain sympathy," he said.

Ahmed Ijaz, a political observer in Islamabad, questioned the abrupt departure of Bushra Bibi and Gandapur, arguing their actions would deepen divisions within the party. Yet political observers said this week's events have also cast a shadow on the government's credibility.

—Al Jazeera

LETTERS

write to us at salarenglishdigital@gmail.com

Displaced Lebanese hang onto hope for home amid truce talks

Thousands of Lebanese displaced by the war between Israel and Hezbollah militants returned home on Wednesday as a ceasefire took hold, driving cars stacked with personal belongings and defying warnings from Lebanese and Israeli troops to avoid some areas.

If it endures, the ceasefire would end nearly 14 months of fighting between Israel and Hezbollah, which escalated in mid-September into all-out war and threatened to pull Hezbollah's patron, Iran, and Israel's closest ally, the United States, into a broader conflagration.

The truce in Lebanon could give reprieve to the 1.2 million Lebanese displaced by the fighting and the tens of thousands of Israelis who fled their homes along the border.

"They were a nasty and ugly 60 days," said Mohammed Kaafarani, 59, who was displaced from the Lebanese village of Bidias. "We reached a point where there was no place to hide."

The US- and France-brokered deal, approved by Israel late Tuesday, calls for an initial two-month halt to fighting and requires Hezbollah to end its armed presence in southern Lebanon, while Israeli troops are to return to their side of the border.

Displaced residents return to Dahiyeh, in Beirut, Lebanon, following the ceasefire between Israel and Hezbollah
PHOTO: PTI

Israel says it reserves the right to strike Hezbollah should it violate the terms of the deal. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's office said troops arrested four Hezbollah operatives, including a local commander, who had entered what it referred to as a restricted area. It said troops have been ordered to prevent people from returning to villages near the border.

Israel can claim major victories in the war, including the killing of Hezbollah's top leader Hassan Nasrallah and most of its senior commanders, as well as the destruction."We don't care about the rubble or destruction. We lost our livelihood, our properties, but it's OK, it will all come back," said Fatima Hanifa, evoking the rebuilding after the 2006 war.

"It will be even more beautiful. And I say to Netanyahu that you have lost, and lost, and lost because we are back and the others (Israelis) didn't come back." Other Lebanese are more critical of Hezbollah, accusing it of having dragged the economically devastated country into an unnecessary war.

"They control us and we can't do anything about it. This war killed whoever it killed and now they're telling us it's a victory," said a young man who was returning from neighbouring Syria after being displaced from the eastern Bekaa province. He spoke on condition of anonymity, fearing retribution. Some Israelis are concerned the deal doesn't go far enough In Israel, the mood was far more subdued, with displaced Israelis concerned that Hezbollah had not been defeated and that there was no progress toward returning hostages held in Gaza. The Lebanese military asked displaced people returning to southern Lebanon to avoid frontline villages and towns until Israeli forces withdraw.

Residents will return to vast destruction wrought by the Israeli military, with entire villages flattened. The military said it found vast weapons caches and infrastructure it says was meant for Hezbollah to launch an 7 October-style attack on northern Israel.

—PTI

SALAR

'PM's claims on Waqf assets are baseless'

K Rahman Khan

Former Rajya Sabha deputy chairman Dr K Rahman Khan has dismissed Prime Minister Narendra Modi's allegations that Congress party disregarded Supreme Court orders to pursue vote-bank politics through appeasement policies.

Modi had cited an example of Delhi Waqf Board to attack Congress. The Prime Minister claimed that just before leaving office in 2014, the Congress-led UPA government handed over properties in Delhi to the Waqf Board. He also said the Constitution, as drafted by BR Ambedkar, does not mention the Waqf Board, implying its creation was politically motivated.

Citing historical and legal aspects, Khan called Modi's claims baseless rumours. The ownership of 123 Waqf properties, including mosques, graveyards, mausoleums and madrasas, is not new and spans over three decades, the former Union minister of minority affairs said. These properties are significant places of faith and worship and the process of identifying these properties began during Indira Gandhi's tenure as Prime Minister (1970s); and it was not a last-minute decision by the Congress government as alleged by Modi.

During Gandhi's administration, a government committee identified 400–500 properties in Delhi as Waqf properties, out of which 123 were officially recognised, the Congress leader said. These properties were subsequently leased for 99 years.

This was not politically motivated but a restoration of these properties to their rightful status based on historical and legal evidence, the former MP said.

The properties were religious and not utilised for any governmental purposes. After years of legal proceedings, the Delhi High Court eventually ruled in favour of returning these properties to the Waqf Board. The government's decision to notify these properties as Waqf was lawful and aimed at preserving their religious and cultural heritage, Dr Khan said.

K Rahman Khan is ex-deputy chairman of Rajya Sabha, spearheaded the 2013 amendments to the Waqf Act of 1995

All India Muslim Personal Law Board recently held an awareness programme for Muslims on Shariah and Constitutional rights amid the ongoing Waqf issue at Quddus Saheb Eidgah Maidan in Bengaluru
PHOTO: MOHAMMED ASAD

Be your best version through holy scriptures

Majid Parekh

- If divine teachings are used as a tool to carve your personality it contributes to both satisfaction and success in life. To attain the best version of ourselves, it is important to recognise that we already have the best guide with us—the holy scriptures

We humans are blessed with the most precious gift of intelligence. Unfortunately, we are not content with this and desperately desire the outer beauty. And, in this quest, we try to leave no stone unturned.

Since the last few decades, a new 'personality grooming' trend has been growing. People of all ages join various classes based on the above-mentioned issues. Nowadays, many books address these subjects and they are much in demand. Grooming ourselves is important and much needed. But, why are religious sermons or scriptures not commonly considered guides for personality grooming?

"Gentleness, silence, self-restraint, purity are the disciplines of the mind," said Bhagavad Gita.

Spiritual leader Buddha said: "You too shall pass away. Knowing this, how can you quarrel?"

Sikhism founder Guru Nanak said: "Speak only that which will bring you honour."

The Bible said: "Love your neighbour as yourself."

Whereas the Holy Quran said, "Speak to people kindly".

These are just a few moral values that can help in shaping our personalities. None of these are so difficult that they cannot be incorporated into our lives.

Why do we forget that all the scriptures are for the betterment of mankind? The composer of the texts possesses the most in-depth knowledge of human nature which no one has. Yet, we tend to overlook these resourceful books that have been with us for ages. In my understanding, this time of the year is best to discuss personality development through divinity.

Why? Recently, we celebrated Ram Navami with Eid-ul-Fitr which falls around the same time. How beneficial it would have been if instead of just blindly following the rituals we tried to understand and inculcate the teachings of both religions.

With all due respect to the 'modern man', I would like to raise a thought-provoking question. Why are our personalities so tainted that they need outer grooming? Didn't our elders recite these soul-purifying texts to us since we were small? Of course, they did. Then what is the missing link here? What went wrong that disconnected us from our roots? Instead of following what our peers are doing, we must introspect and try to find that missing link. That missing link is probably our overconfidence and neglect of our basic values.

All the divine scriptures teach, guide and show us the right path. Most of us underestimate it because we think that personality development is developing the appearance of the physical self, which is wrong. You can't look beautiful unless you have a serene and calm soul. A groomed personality helps you gain acceptance and recognition from people around you. Your impressive personality plays an important role not only in an individual's professional life but also in their personal life.

But, the idea is true only when the personality is groomed in the true sense. Flaunting your trendy attire or being affluent in a certain language does not make you well-groomed. Things can't be beautiful on the outside unless they are pure from within. And, this is where our divine scriptures help us.

These holy scriptures do not teach us the latest fashion trends, but they show us a path to lead a morally rich life and set a good precedence for our younger generations.

Well, we all want to become the best versions of ourselves, but many wonder if it is possible to attain this perfection once we are an adult. The answer is, certainly, a resounding yes. Of course, we can always find ways to improve ourselves. For most of us, this answer will lead to more questions. However, the answer is simple yet difficult. Let's not forget that personal development is a lifelong process. It helps you assess your life goals, allowing you to be proactive and take charge of all your actions. If divine teachings are used as a tool to carve your personality it contributes to both satisfaction and success in life. To attain the best version of ourselves, it is important to recognise that we already have the best guide with us—the holy scriptures.

The author is the Regional Secretary, Society for Communal Harmony in New Delhi

Four dead in migrant shipwreck on Greek island

ATHENS, 28 NOV

Four people, including two children, have died after a boat carrying migrants ran aground on a rocky shoreline on the eastern Greek island of Samos, officials said on Thursday. Sixteen people were rescued, but it remained unclear how many were aboard the boat. The Greek coast guard launched a search-and-rescue operation involving patrol vessels, lifeboats, and land teams to locate any potential missing passengers. It marks the second deadly incident involving migrants on Samos this week. On Monday, eight migrants — six children and two women — died in a shipwreck off the island. *—PTI*

Armed groups kill over dozens in Syria attack

DAMASCUS, 28 NOV

Dozens of Syrian army soldiers and rebel fighters have been killed in northern Aleppo province where the Hay'et Tahrir al-Sham (HTS) armed group and allied forces have overrun at least 10 areas under the control of Syrian President Bashar al-Assad's military, according to reports.

The UK-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights (SOHR) said almost 100 fighters and soldiers were killed during clashes on Wednesday, following an operation launched by HTS, which controls a large area of northwestern Syria. Activists working with the observatory reported 44 members of HTS killed along with 16 members of allied armed groups. "The monitoring group said that civilians, including children, have been also killed and injured in the clashes, which saw Syrian army forces fire "hundreds of shells and missiles on civil and military positions" during the fighting. – *Al Jazeera*

Pakistan-China hold talks on counter-terrorism

ISLAMABAD, 28 NOV

Pakistan and China military officials held talks on counter-terrorism and regional security amid unease following the recent attacks on Chinese nationals. General Zhang Youxia, Vice Chairman of the Central Military Commission (CMC) China and one of China's two top military leaders, is visiting Pakistan along with a high-level delegation, according to a military statement. General Zhang held a one-on-one meeting with Army Chief Gen Asim Munir on Wednesday, followed by delegation-level discussions. Zhang spoke about Pakistan's ongoing counter-terrorism efforts, which remain a key topic of discussion between the two countries. *—PTI*

PHOTO: FACEBOOK

US influencer Candace barred from N Zealand

WELLINGTON, 28 NOV

The US conservative political commenter Candace Owens was refused a visa to enter New Zealand for a speaking engagement because she had been banned from another country, immigration officials said on Thursday. News of the ruling came weeks after neighbouring Australia also rejected her visa request, citing remarks in which she denied Nazi medical experimentation on Jews in concentration camps during World War II. Owens is scheduled to speak at a series of events in several Australian cities and in Auckland, New Zealand, in next year. Tickets remain on sale and there is no acknowledgement on the promoter's website that she has been refused entry to both countries. Owens is accused of promoting conspiracy theories and antisemitism and has ignited rows with her remarks opposing Black Lives Matter and feminism. *—PTI*

Russian attack cuts off power to 1M Ukrainians

Half of Ukraine's energy infra has been destroyed during the 3 years of war with Russia

KYIV, 28 NOV

Russia conducted a "massive" attack against Ukraine's energy infrastructure on Thursday, firing nearly 200 missiles and drones and leaving more than a million households without power, Ukrainian officials said.

Russia's second major aerial attack on Ukraine's power grid in less than two weeks amplified fears that the Kremlin aims to cripple the country's power generation capacity before winter.

Ukrainian officials have warned recently that Russia was stockpiling cruise and ballistic missiles, presumably for another pre-winter aerial campaign against Ukraine's power grid. Ukrainian officials have in the past accused Russia of "weaponising winter."

Over 280,000 households in the northwestern Rivne region were without electricity because of the attack, according to regional Gov. Oleksandr Koval. Running water supplies were also patchy in affected areas. Some schools in Rivne city switched to online classes.

There were also strikes on the bordering Volyn region, where 215,000 households had no electricity, regional head Ivan Rudnytskyi said. All critical infrastructure that lost power was switched to generators.

Over 280,000 households in the northwestern Rivne region were without electricity because of the attack
PHOTO: X

Around half of Ukraine's energy infrastructure has been destroyed during the almost three years of war with Russia, and rolling electricity blackouts are common. Kyiv's Western allies have sought to help Ukraine protect power generation with air defense systems and funds for rebuilding. Russia in previous years has targeted Ukraine's electricity generation, aiming to deny civilians critical heating and drinking water supplies during the bitter winter months and break Ukrainian spirits. The attacks also seek to hobble Ukraine's defense industry that is now producing missiles, drones and armoured vehicles, among other military assets. The war has been going in Russia's favour in recent months as its bigger army uses its advantages in manpower and equipment to push Ukrainian forces backward in eastern areas, though its offensive has been slow and costly.

Explosions were reported in Kyiv, Kharkiv, Rivne, Khmelnytskyi, Lutsk, and many other cities in central and western Ukraine. Zelenskyy urged Western countries to accelerate delivery of air defence weaponry. Ukrainian officials in the past have grumbled that military aid is slow to arrive. *—PTI*

Lower conscription age to 18: US to Ukraine

KYIV, 28 NOV

PHOTO: X

Ukraine should consider lowering the age of military service to 18, a US official has said, as the outgoing White House administration is reported to be preparing a new weapons package to bolster Kyiv before President Joe Biden leaves office in January.

Speaking to reporters, an unnamed senior US official said on Wednesday that Ukraine should consider lowering the age of military service from 25 to 18 years, as the country was not mobilising or training enough new soldiers to replace those killed in action.

The official also said Ukrainian forces now have "healthy stockpiles of the vital tools, munitions and weapons that they need to succeed on the battlefield".

However, a source in the office of President Volodymyr Zelenskyy told the Reuters news agency Ukraine does not have the resources to equip current troops.

Kyiv, he added, would not "compensate for our partners' delays in decision-making and supply chains with the lives of our soldiers and of the youngest of our guys".

In April, Zelenskyy already used martial law to lower the military mobilisation age for combat duty from 27 to 25, which had been in place since Russia invaded Ukraine in February 2022.

The call by some in the US for increased recruitment in Ukraine comes as President Biden is reportedly preparing a USD 725million weapons package for Ukraine in advance of the handover to President-elect Donald Trump in January. *—Al Jazeera*

9 killed as Israel bombards Gaza

GAZA, 28 NOV

PHOTO: X

The Israeli military has targeted residential buildings, public facilities and infrastructure across the Gaza Strip, killing at least nine members of a family in the Nuseirat refugee camp.

Reporting from central Gaza's Deir el-Balah, Al Jazeera's Hani Mahmoud said on Thursday that Israeli ground forces were conducting a military operation seeking to expand the Netzarim Corridor – a 6.5km (4-mile) stretch established in the centre of the enclave by the Israeli military that divides northern and southern Gaza.

"In doing so, it carries out these attacks to destroy remaining residential buildings ... that the Israeli military claims are being used as observation points by Palestinian fighters," Mahmoud reported, adding that witnesses said there were large numbers of civilians inside these homes.

In northern Gaza, Israeli jets carried out air raids, targeting the remaining residential buildings in the town of Beit Lahiya, killing at least four people, Mahmoud said.

In the south, at least four people were killed when Israeli drones attacked a group of Palestinian civilians near a camp for displaced people in the town of Abasan, east of the city of Khan Younis, according to the Wafa news agency. *—Al Jazeera*

B'desh HC refuses to ban ISKCON

WASHINGTON, 28 NOV

Bangladesh High Court Thursday rejected a petition seeking a ban on ISKCON's activities in the country, days after a lawyer was killed in a clash between security personnel and supporters of a Hindu leader, previously linked to the religious group.

A lawyer had sought a ban on the International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON) after placing some newspaper reports related to the organisation on Wednesday.

"The two-member High Court bench of Justice Farah Mahbub and Debashish Roy Chowdhury on Thursday declined to ban the ISKCON activities in Bangladesh," a spokesman of the attorney general's office said.

He said the bench made the decision after the attorney general's office submitted a report on the action taken by the government regarding

Several Hindu American groups sought sanctions against Bangladesh over attacks on minorities
PHOTO: PTI

> **Untoward incidents in the country's apex and lower courts deeply concerning. All developments are being closely monitored to ensure the judicial processes remain undisturbed**
> -Syed Refaat Ahmed, B'desh Chief Justice

the death of assistant government prosecutor Saiful Islam Alif in the northeastern port city of Chattogram earlier this week.

Hindu leader Chinmoy Krishna Das Brahmachary, arrested earlier this week, was sent to jail by a Chattogram court on sedition charges, sparking a violent protest during which advocate Alif was killed. Chinmoy was earlier expelled from ISKCON.

In a telephonic interview with PTI from Dhaka, the ISKCON's chief in Bangladesh Charu Chandra Das Brahmachari expressed relief over the High Court's decision, rejecting demands to ban the organisation's activities in the country.

"No government would ever agree to such demands from extremists as we are a peaceful organisation," he said, welcoming the High Court's order as evidence of this.

Meanwhile, condemning attacks on minorities in Bangladesh, several Hindu American groups have sought that US aid for the South Asian country be made contingent on its government taking measurable action to protect these populations.

Bangladesh's minority Hindus, which constitute only about 8 per cent of the 170 million population, have faced over 200 attacks in 50-odd districts since the fall of Sheikh Hasina's Awami League government on 5 August. *—PTI*

Trump, Mexican President differ on migration talks

WEST PALM BEACH, 28 NOV

US president-elect Donald Trump declared a win on stopping illegal immigration through Mexico on Wednesday after talking with Mexico's leader. But Mexican President Claudia Sheinbaum suggested Mexico was already doing its part and had no interest in closing its borders.

The two spoke just days after Trump threatened to impose sweeping new tariffs on Canada and Mexico as part of his effort to crack down on illegal immigration and drugs.

Trump said Sheinbaum "agreed to stop Migration through Mexico." Sheinbaum indicated separately on social media that she told Trump that Mexico is already "taking care of" migrant caravans, calling it an "excellent conversation."

The exchange between appeared to confirm for Trump the value of threatening to disrupt trade with import taxes. *—PTI*

Zuckerberg dines with Trump in Mar-a-Lago

Donald Trump dined with Meta CEO Mark Zuckerberg at Mar-a-Lago club in Florida. The 40-year-old chief executive of Meta, has been carefully trying to mend ties with Trump. Both men have had a strained relationship over the years, with Facebook being among social media networks that banned Trump after the attack on the US Capitol on 6 January, 2021.

US embassy in Pak issues security alert

PESHAWAR, 28 NOV

The US Mission has issued a security alert urging its citizens not to visit Peshawar in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province in northwest Pakistan until 16 December due to "security concerns."

The security alert titled 'Threat to Serena Hotel, Peshawar' advising the US Mission personnel to avoid the said hotel in Peshawar, the capital of the province, was issued on Wednesday and advised caution with immediate effect.

The 10 September advisory lists the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa at 'Level 4' of the threat perception in the 'Do Not Travel' There has been an uptick in terror activities and attacks on security personnel in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa over last few months. *—PTI*

CRACKDOWN ON CORRUPTION

China says top military official Hua suspended

BEIJING, 28 NOV

China said on Thursday that top military official Miao Hua had been removed from office and was suspected of "serious violations of discipline," the latest senior apparatchik to fall in a sweeping crackdown on graft in the country's armed forces.

The ruling Chinese Communist Party "has decided to suspend Hua from duty pending investigation," Wu Qian, spokesman of China's Ministry of Defence, told a press briefing.

He is one of five members of the body that oversees the world's largest standing military, in addition to China's leader Xi Jinping, who heads the commission. But "serious violations of discipline" are commonly used by officials in China as a euphemism for corruption. The announcement follows reports, unconfirmed by Beijing, that Defence Minister Dong Jun has been placed under investigation for corruption. If confirmed, Dong would be the third Chinese defence minister in a row to be probed for graft.

In Xi's first term as Party Secretary, he was known for a multi-year campaign against corruption that has brought down numerous high-profile political rivals, and thousands of officials. This has led some to allege a widespread purge of officers suspected of conspiring with outside forces or simply being insufficiently loyal to Xi. *—PTI*

12 dead in Sri Lanka following extreme weather

COLOMBO, 28 NOV

At least 12 people are reported dead and over 3.30 lakh people affected in Sri Lanka due to extreme weather conditions following a massive rain system in southwest Bay of Bengal, officials said on Thursday. The inclement weather is a result of a Deep Depression (extremely heavy rainfall causing system) in the Bay of Bengal, the officials said, it has mainly affected the eastern province.

Meanwhile, on Thursfay ver 3,30,000 people from over 98,000 families in 21 districts have been affected, Disaster Management Centre (DMC) officials said. *—PTI*

CLIMATE FURY ACROSS GLOBE

Rescue workers in Deli Serdang, North Sumatra, Indonesia, on Thursday
PHOTO: X

7 dead in Indonesia landslide

SIBOLANGIT, 28 NOV

Seven people have died in a landslide triggered by torrential rains in Indonesia's Sumatra island, officials said on Thursday, adding to the death toll from landslides in the region this week. Rescuers recovered the bodies of the victims, including a driver and passengers, from a tourist bus that was covered by trees, mud, and rocks in the landslide on the road from Medan city to Berastagi town in Indonesia's North Sumatra province. The route is the main access from the capital Medan to other districts in the region. The bus was among vehicles that had been cut off by landslides.

15 dead in Uganda landslide

NAIROBI, 28 NOV

At least 15 people have died in eastern Uganda after landslides buried 40 homes in six villages, relief officials said on Thursday. The Uganda Red Cross Society said 13 bodies have been recovered and the rescue effort is continuing. The landslides happened after heavy rains on Wednesday night in the mountainous district of Bulambuli, where landslides are common. Two rescue boats capsized on Wednesday during a rescue mission on River Nile where Pakwach bridge was submerged. *—PTI*

Rescue workers search for bodies after landslides following heavy rains in Bulambuli, eastern Uganda, on Thursday
PHOTO: PTI

3 dead as South Korea battles heavy snow

SEOUL, 28 NOV

Heavy snowfall in South Korea has disrupted flights and ferries and killed at least three people. The country grappled with its second day of record snow on Thursday, with the authorities reporting that three people had died in Gyeonggi province, where the capital, Seoul, is located. One person died when a golf practice net loaded with snow collapsed in the city of Pyeongtaek, while another was struck by a falling tree in the city of Yongin, according to the Yonhap news agency.

Up to 40cm of snow had piled up in parts of Seoul by 11am. *—Al Jazeera*

Rupee weakens against US Dollar, closes at 84.49

MUMBAI, 28 NOV

The rupee depreciated by 9 paise, closing at 84.49 against the US dollar on Thursday, influenced by declining domestic equities and the strengthening of the American currency abroad. Forex traders noted that mixed-to-weak crude oil prices provided some support. Opening at 84.45, the rupee fell to an intra-day low of 84.50 and reported a decrease from Wednesday's close of 84.40. Analysts predict a negative bias for the rupee due to US dollar strength and month-end demand from importers, although easing crude oil prices and potential foreign institutional investor inflows may offer support. The dollar index rose by 0.25 per cent to 106.34, while Brent crude prices edged up to USD 72.89 per barrel. *—PTI*

Silver down to 3-wk low, slips back to ₹90K mark

NEW DELHI, 28 NOV

Silver prices tumbled to a three-week low by losing Rs 4,900 to Rs 90,900 per kg, while gold slipped Rs 100 to Rs 78,700 per 10g in the national capital on Thursday on frantic selling by stockists and retailers, according to the All India Sarafa Association. The yellow metal of 99.5 per cent purity declined Rs 400 to Rs 78,300 per 10g on Thursday. Price of gold of 99.9 per cent and 99.5 per cent purity closed higher at Rs 78,800 and Rs 78,700 per 10g, respectively, on Wednesday. Silver also dropped Rs 4,900 to trade at Rs 90,900 per kg, marking a steepest fall on poor offtake by jewellers and coin makers.
Earlier, the white metal had slumped Rs 4,600 on November 4. On Wednesday, silver saw its steepest single-day jump of Rs 5,200 and regained the Rs 95,000 per kg level after a gap of two-weeks in the national capital.*—PTI*

GAIL revives M'luru PTA plant with INEOS partnership

NEW DELHI, 28 NOV

GAIL (India) Ltd has re-engaged INEOS as a process licensor to restore its purified terephthalic acid (PTA) manufacturing facility in Mangaluru, according to a statement released on Thursday. The collaboration was formalised via an Amendment Agreement through GAIL's subsidiary, GAIL Mangalore Petrochemicals Limited (GMPL). This initiative aims to revitalise the plant, which has a production capacity of 1.25 million tonnes per annum and is situated in the Special Economic Zone (SEZ) in Mangalore. Following the acquisition of JBF Petrochemicals during insolvency proceedings, GAIL is addressing legacy issues to ensure the plant's operational stability. GAIL officials assert that the project will bolster India's petrochemical sector. *—PTI*

Dr Reddy's launches drugs for nasal cancer

NEW DELHI, 28 NOV

Dr Reddy's Laboratories has announced the launch of Toripalimab, a new treatment for recurrent or metastatic nasopharyngeal carcinoma (NPC), in India. NPC is an aggressive form of head and neck cancer originating in the nasopharynx. The drug, marketed under the brand name Zytorvi, is the only immuno-oncology therapy approved by global regulatory bodies, including the USFDA and EMA, for adult patients with RM-NPC. Dr Reddy's CEO MV Ramana highlighted that Toripalimab, a next-generation PD-1 inhibitor, offers superior outcomes compared to the previous standard of care, chemotherapy. With this launch, India becomes the third country to access this treatment, following China and the US. Dr Reddy's aims to serve over 1.5 billion patients by 2030, continuing its focus on oncology. Shares fell 0.85 percent to Rs 1,190.35 on the BSE. *—PTI*

FIIs recorded a modest acquisition of equities worth Rs 7.78 crore **PHOTO: X**

BSE falls by 1,190pts, slips below 80K mark

Nifty fell by 1.49% to finish at 23,914.15

MUMBAI, 28 NOV

The BSE benchmark Sensex plummeted by 1,190.34 points, or 1.48 per cent, to close at 79,043.74, after dipping as low as 78,918.92 during the day—a drop of 1,315.16 points or 1.63 per cent. Similarly, the NSE Nifty fell by 360.75 points, shedding 1.49 per cent to finish at 23,914.15.

Vinod Nair, Head of Research at Geojit Financial Services, explained that domestic markets took a pause following a robust start to the week. He attributed the downturn to an overnight sell-off in the US market, driven by renewed uncertainties surrounding the rate cut trajectory and escalating geopolitical tensions, which adversely affected heavyweight IT and consumer discretionary stocks.

Among the 30 constituents of the Sensex, notable laggards included Mahindra & Mahindra, Infosys, HCL Technologies, Adani Ports, and Reliance Industries, with State Bank of India being the sole stock in the green.

While Asian markets saw mixed outcomes—with Seoul and Tokyo finishing positively, while Shanghai and Hong Kong declined—European markets were on an upward trajectory. The US markets concluded lower on Wednesday, primarily dragged down by tech stocks.

Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) recorded a modest acquisition of equities worth Rs 7.78 crore on. Meanwhile, the global oil benchmark Brent crude increased by 0.49 per cent, reaching USD 73.18 per barrel. This follows a slight rise in the indices the previous day, where the Sensex gained 230.02 points, or 0.29 per cent. *—PTI*

AMID US INDICTMENT

5 Adani firms trade higher; Adani Total soars nearly 19%

NEW DELHI, 28 NOV

Shares of five of the 11 listed Adani Group firms ended higher on Thursday, with Adani Total Gas soaring nearly 16 per cent, in an otherwise bearish stock market.

The stock of Adani Total Gas surged 15.69 per cent, Adani Energy Solutions zoomed 10 per cent, Adani Green Energy soared 10 per cent, Adani Power jumped 6.95 per cent, and Adani Enterprises climbed 1.63 per cent on the BSE.

Adani Energy Solutions and Adani Green Energy hit their highest trading permissible limit for the day.

However, shares of Adani Ports declined 2.73 per cent, NDTV went lower 2.03 per cent, ACC skidded 0.75 per cent, Ambuja Cements dipped 0.48 per cent, Adani Wilmar (0.44 per cent) and Sanghi Industries (0.17 per cent).

On Wednesday, shares of all Adani Group firms ended sharply higher, with Adani Total Gas and Adani Power soaring nearly 20 per cent.

Embattled billionaire Gautam Adani and his aides have not been charged under the US Foreign Corrupt Practices Act, an Adani Group entity said on Wednesday, adding that they faced three other charges, including securities and wire fraud that are punishable with monetary fines.

The US Department of Justice's (US DOJ) indictment filed in a New York Court last week does not mention Gautam Adani, founder chairman of the ports-to-energy conglomerate, his nephew Sagar, or Vneet Jaain in any count related to conspiracy to violate the FCPA, Adani Green Energy Ltd (AGEL) said in a stock exchange filing. *—PTI*

PHOTO: PTI

LANKA, DUBAI FIRMS BACK ADANI

NEW DELHI, 28 NOV

Abu Dhabi's International Holding Company (IHC), one of the largest sovereign wealth funds with assets nearing USD 100 billion, has reiterated its support for the Adani Group, maintaining a positive outlook on investments amidst the recent US indictment of founder chairman Gautam Adani.

IHC stated that its partnership with Adani Group reflects confidence in the conglomerate's contributions to green energy and sustainability. The firm had invested approximately USD 500 million each in Adani Green Energy and Adani Transmission, along with USD 1 billion in Adani Enterprises in April 2022. While it sold a portion of its stakes in AGEL and ATL, it increased its holding in Adani Enterprises to over 5 per cent. *—ANI*

Kerala, Adani sign new port deal

T'PURAM, 28 NOV

Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan announced a supplementary concession agreement with Adani Vizhinjam Port Private Limited to facilitate ongoing development of the Vizhinjam International Port, with commissioning now set for next month.

The agreement extends the project timeline by five years, allowing for phases two and three—expected to be completed by 2028—with an additional investment of Rs 10,000 crore, increasing capacity to 3 million TEUs. Despite a Rs 219 crore penalty for delays, the state will commence receiving revenue shares earlier than anticipated, starting in 2034. The state government has so far invested Rs 2,159.39 crore of its Rs 5,595 crore commitment to the project, with Adani contributing Ra 2,454 crore. *—ANI*

PHOTO: PTI

- Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan announced a supplementary concession agreement with Adani Vizhinjam Port

IN MAHARASHTRA

Sugar body denies US charges of labour exploitation

NEW DELHI, 28 NOV

The National Federation of Cooperative Sugar Factories Ltd (NFCSF) has firmly rejected allegations of labour exploitation within the sugarcane harvesting sector in Maharashtra, which were reported in a US media outlet. NFCSF President Harshvardhan Patil described the claims as a "conspiracy" aimed at undermining the Indian sugar industry.

Patil cautioned that the dissemination of "misinformation" could jeopardise sugar sales, particularly impacting major buyers such as Coca-Cola and Pepsi, who may face pressure to shun purchases from Maharashtra and Gujarat. "The media report is far from the ground realities," he stated, adding that the federation has contacted the US Consulate, the Union Home Ministry, and the Prime Minister's Office as an investigation is currently underway.

He elaborated on harvesting practices in the region, explaining that Maharashtra and Gujarat predominantly utilise manual harvesting by skilled workers recruited through intermediaries known as 'mokadam'. The NFCSF asserted that, despite some isolated incidents, sugar mills are committed to supporting workers with essential services including shelter, nutrition, timely payments, educational support for children, and health insurance.

To address labour shortages, NFCSF has requested a loan from the National Cooperative Development Corporation to invest in cane harvesters, noting that the workforce has declined from 1.5 million a decade ago to roughly half that number now.

Additionally, NFCSF urged the government to increase the minimum selling price of sugar, permit the export of 1.5 million tonnes of surplus sugar, and raise ethanol purchase prices amid a projected decline in total sugar production this season. *—PTI*

NFCSF urged the government to increase the minimum selling price of sugar **PHOTO: PTI**

Finance ministry to review windfall tax on fuel exports

NEW DELHI, 28 NOV

The Finance Ministry is set to review the effectiveness of the windfall tax imposed on petrol, diesel, and Aviation Turbine Fuel (ATF) exports as global crude oil prices stabilise, according to sources. The introduction of the export tax in July 2022 followed substantial profits made by oil refiners at the cost of domestic supplies.

The Finance Ministry has been prompted to reassess this tax, especially after the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas submitted a letter on the matter. In September, the government abolished the windfall tax on domestically produced crude oil, signalling a potential shift in fiscal strategy.

Currently, the Special Additional Excise Duty (SAED) is notified fortnightly based on average oil prices over the period, with the last revision on 31 August setting the windfall tax on crude at Rs 1,850 per tonne. As of 18 September, the SAED for the export of diesel, petrol, and ATF remains at 'nil'.

Additionally, the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas has suggested that natural gas be included under the Goods and Services Tax (GST) framework. *—PTI*

INDIA ENGAGED WITH 30 NATIONS FOR MRAs: CBIC

NEW DELHI, 28 NOV

Sanjay Kumar Agarwal, Chairman of the Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs, announced on Thursday that India is actively negotiating mutual recognition agreements (MRAs) with the customs authorities of approximately 30 countries. These agreements are intended to facilitate international trade by reducing the need for dual certifications, thereby lowering compliance costs and simplifying regulatory requirements.

Agarwal highlighted India's ongoing efforts to enhance the Authorised Economic Operator (AEO) programme, which identifies compliant exporters and importers for expedited customs facilitation. *—PTI*

'CHINA PLUS ONE OPENS DOORS FOR INDIA'

NEW DELHI, 28 NOV

Arvind Subramanian, former chief economic adviser, highlighted the emerging 'China plus one' opportunity for India, asserting that Tamil Nadu is striving to leverage its competitive edge in attracting foreign direct investment (FDI). Speaking at an event hosted by the Centre for Social and Economic Progress, Subramanian indicated that India's ability to draw FDI has lagged behind that of countries like China, Taiwan, and Vietnam, resulting in domestic firms failing to integrate effectively into the global value chain.

He noted that not being part of this chain has negatively affected India's exports and labour-intensive sectors. Subramanian explained that the labour-intensive manufacturing sector in India has underperformed due to a range of issues, including stringent labour laws and the prevalence of small-sized firms.

The term 'China plus one' describes the trend of multinational companies diversifying their operations beyond China. Former Planning Commission deputy chairman Montek Singh Ahluwalia also spoke at the event, expressing concern over the potential stigmatization of serious businessmen in the current climate.

Recently, Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M K Stalin announced that the state has attracted investments exceeding Rs 9 lakh crore over the past three years, resulting in the creation of 3.1 million new jobs. - *—PTI*

BEML bags ₹3,658 cr deal in TN

NEW DELHI, 28 NOV

Bengaluru-based BEML has announced that it has been awarded a substantial contract worth approximately Rs 3,658 crore by Chennai Metro Rail Ltd. The project entails the delivery of 210 metro cars, arranged into 70 three-car train sets, designed to operate primarily in Unattended Train Operation mode.

The metro trains will be deployed across three significant corridors in Chennai: Madhavaram to Sipcot (45.8km), Lighthouse to Poonamallee (26.1km), and Madhavaram to Sholinganallur (47km). The complete network will extend over 118.9km, comprising 76.3km of elevated tracks and 42.6km of underground sections. The first train set is slated for delivery in January 2027, with the final one expected by April 2029.

The contract encompasses the design, manufacture, supply, testing, commissioning, and training for Standard Gauge Metro Rolling Stock (Electrical Multiple Units) and Depot Machinery & Plants, alongside a 15-year comprehensive maintenance agreement. BEML's CMD, Shantanu Roy, expressed pride in the company's role in enhancing the nation's infrastructure development. BEML is a prominent 'Schedule A' company under the Ministry of Defence, contributing significantly to India's core sectors, including Defence, Rail, Power, Mining, and Construction. *—PTI*

Cooperatives to create 5.5cr jobs by 2030: Report

NEW DELHI, 28 NOV

India's cooperative sector is forecasted to create approximately 5.5 crore direct jobs and 5.6 crore self-employment opportunities by 2030, according to a recent report by management consultancy firm Primus Partners. Released on Thursday, the report highlights India's cooperative network, the largest in the world, accounting for nearly 30 per cent of the 30 lakh cooperative societies globally.

"As India moves towards its ambitious target of becoming a USD 5 trillion economy by 2030, the cooperative sector emerges as a crucial driver of economic growth and social equity," the report states. It underscores the sector's significant role as a powerful engine of progress and prosperity.

The 'Indian Cooperative Movement' report notes that cooperatives contributed to 13.3 per cent of total employment in the economy as of 2016-17, reflecting a remarkable growth from 1.2 million jobs in 2007-08 to 5.8 million in 2016-17—an annual growth rate of 18.9 per cent. Looking ahead, cooperatives are projected to become even more influential job creators.

The report also highlights the cooperative sector's impact on self-employment, which surged from 15.47 million jobs in 2006-07 to 30 million by 2018. If growth trends continue, the sector could generate 56 million self-employment opportunities by 2030. *—PTI*

GAMING APP CASE

CCI orders probe against Google for unfair biz

NEW DELHI, 28 NOV

Fair trade regulator CCI on Thursday ordered a probe against Google and its affiliates for alleged unfair business practices with respect to listing of real money gaming apps on Play Store.

The Commission also directed the Director General ('DG') to complete the investigation and submit a consolidated report within 60 days.

The probe follows a complaint by Winzo Games, accusing Google of abusing its dominant position and unfairly favouring select gaming categories, thereby distorting competition.

In its 24-page order, the regulator noted that the selective inclusion of DFS and Rummy apps gives them an undue competitive advantage.

CCI also flagged concerns regarding Google's sideloading warnings displayed when users attempt to download RMG apps.

These warnings, Winzo claimed, tarnish its reputation and discourage potential users from accessing its app.

Winzo also alleged that warnings on sideloading and payments were standard security measures aimed at safeguarding users.

The regulator also found that Google's justifications for its pilot programme and advertising policies were inconsistent and ambiguous.

The regulator also pointed out that Google's dominance in the Android ecosystem made it imperative to assess its policies for anti-competitive outcomes. The Play Store, being pre-installed on all Android devices, is deemed a "must-have" platform for app developers.

The exclusion of non-DFS and non-Rummy RMG apps from the Play Store amounts to a denial of market access, the Commission said. *—PTI*

CCI pointed out that Google's dominance in the Android ecosystem made it imperative to assess its policies for anti-competitive outcomes **PHOTO: X**

PHOTO: X

Kane scores 93 and NZ 319-8 on 1st day against England

CHRISTCHURCH, 28 NOV

Kane Williamson slipped seamlessly back into the New Zealand cricket team, top-scoring with 93 as the Black Caps reached 319-8 Thursday on the first day of the first cricket test against England. At stumps, after 83 overs, Glenn Phillips was 41 not out and Tim Southee at the start of his last series before retirement was 10. Williamson was injured and missed New Zealand's historic 3-0 series win over India in India last month. That meant he had played only two tests and a recent domestic first-class match since June. But he was unimpeded by his recent lack of activity, coming within seven runs of his 33rd test century before falling midway through a final session in which New Zealand lost five wickets and some of the advantage it held earlier in the day. New Zealand was in a strong position at 193-3 at tea with Williamson in full flight but England battled its way back into the match in the last session of a tiring day of warm conditions and blustery winds.—*PTI*

India-Pakistan epic rivalry to unfold on 30 November

DUBAI, 28 NOV

As the ACC Men's Under-19 Asia Cup 2024 approaches, anticipation builds for what promises to be an exciting showcase of young cricketing talent. With intense rivalries and a storied history, the tournament is set to deliver memorable matches and highlight the future stars of cricket. Dubai, Nov 28 (IANS) As the ACC Men's Under-19 Asia Cup 2024 approaches, anticipation builds for what promises to be an exciting showcase of young cricketing talent. With intense rivalries and a storied history, the tournament is set to deliver memorable matches and highlight the future stars of cricket.—*PTI*

PHOTO: X

Rodri eyeing Man City's return before end of season

NEW DELHI, 28 NOV

Manchester City midfielder Rodri is aiming to return to action before the season ends after suffering a ruptured ACL in his right knee during the team's 2-2 draw with Arsenal in September. Manager Pep Guardiola initially ruled him out for the remainder of the campaign. Since Rodri's injury, City have gone six games without a win across all competitions, and the Spanish international hopes to rejoin his teammates before the season concludes.—*PTI*

Yannick Noah takes charge of French para tennis

PARIS, 28 NOV

Yannick Noah, the 1983 French Open champion, was appointed Thursday as the new head of France's para tennis beginning next year. The French tennis federation said in a statement that Noah will be in charge of coordinating wheelchair, visually-impaired as well as deaf and hard-of-hearing tennis activities.Noah had a first experience with disability tennis over the summer when he led the France men's wheelchair tennis team at the Paris Paralympic Games."His main role will be to continue structuring the para tennis department by steering the training and high level' strategy and supporting the development of all para tennis activities across the country," the French tennis federation said. —*PTI*

Pakistan rejects hybrid model for CT

ICC has called a virtual meeting on Friday

KARACHI, 28 NOV

India reportedly won't travel to Pakistan for the Champions Trophy PHOTO: PTI

Pakistan's cricket authorities have taken a firm stance on hosting the ICC Champions Trophy 2025 and have informed the sport's global governing body that a "hybrid model" for the tournament's schedule is "not acceptable", a Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) source told Al Jazeera.

Pakistan is set to host the eight-team men's cricket tournament from February 19 to 9 March, but India's refusal to travel across the border has thrown the competition's logistics into disarray.

The International Cricket Council (ICC) has called a virtual meeting of its board members on Friday.

It will aim to decide the fate of the tournament and resolve the standoff between the two South Asian rivals by proposing a hybrid model to the PCB, wherein all of India's fixtures are moved out of Pakistan and played at a neutral venue.

However, a day ahead of the meeting, the PCB asked the ICC to present alternate solutions as it was adamant about rejecting the proposal.

"The PCB has told the ICC that hybrid is not acceptable," a PCB source, requesting anonymity, told Al Jazeera on Thursday.

"We have also requested the ICC to produce some workable options. It is unacceptable that India backs out of the event in Pakistan."

In another development that could potentially cause major disruptions in cricket's upcoming global events, the PCB has also informed the ICC of its intentions to adopt a tit-for-tat approach at any tournament being held in India. "The PCB has reminded the ICC that until India visits Pakistan, our teams will not travel to India," the source added.

India is scheduled to host the ICC Women's World Cup in 2025 as well as the ICC T20 World Cup 2026 along with co-hosts Sri Lanka.

Earlier on Wednesday, PCB Chairman Mohsin Naqvi said he would "make the best decision for Pakistan" at the board meeting and repeated his board's stance against the split or hybrid model.

"The Champions Trophy will be held in Pakistan," the PCB chief told reporters at the Gaddafi Stadium.

"Whatever happens must be on equal terms and we have made our stance very clear to the ICC." According to the PCB source, the board presented its tournament security plan for the Champions Trophy to the ICC board – which also includes BCCI honorary secretary Jay Shah – on October 21 and received no objections.

The ICC was scheduled to unveil the Champions Trophy fixtures on November 11, until the BCCI communicated its government's decision to bar Rohit Sharma's team from travelling to Pakistan. —*Agencies*

BATTLE FOR WORLD CROWN

It's advantage Gukesh for now but Liren banks on resilient past

SINGAPORE, 28 NOV

India's D Gukesh, left, and Ding Liren of China during their match at the FIDE World Championship 2024 PHOTO: PTI

With nerves no longer a concern for him, teenaged Indian Grandmaster D Gukesh will hold the psychological edge against a slightly shaken defending champion Ding Liren when the two resume their intriguing battle for the World Championship crown in the fourth round here on Friday.Having demonstrated better preparation and claimed his first victory in the third round, the 18-year-old Gukesh is expectedly upbeat and would be looking to just relax on the first rest today.With a maximum of 11 games remaining under classical time control, the scores are tied at 1.5-1.5. This was after Liren won the opener and the second game ended in a draw.Gukesh has clearly shown better preparation, while Liren's calculation let him down in the third game. The match had started with Gukesh facing the Chinese in a French defense game with white pieces and his initial progress gave the Indian a huge time advantage, which he held till the end."It's always nice to win a game, also for the first against such a strong opponent. I think it means more that I got a win in the World Championship, and a very important win," a visibly pleased Gukesh had said after Wednesday's game. The youngster lost the opener playing badly in a complicated middle game but could take heart from the fact that his preparation had come good.In the second game, which was his first white, Liren chose a solid variation in the Italian opening and Gukesh had no trouble whatsoever in equalizing easily out of the opening itself.The game ended in a mere 23 moves vide repetition earning Gukesh a lot of respect for his flawless play with a slightly unfavorable color. Coming into the third game ahead of the first rest day, Gukesh decided to put all his energy, and his opening choice yet again made Liren spend more than half of the allotted time on the first 14 moves.The Chinese later missed an easy equalising method on his 18th turn but it was largely caused by the initial pressure exerted by the Indian.With the scores level, it is unlikely that Liren will pull out all the stops in the next game. Instead, a more cautious approach is expected, as the Chinese champion will hope his skills hold up in crucial moments, avoiding a repeat of the previous slip-ups.Gukesh will be eager to ride the wave of his success as long and as far as possible. His first victory in the match must have provided a significant confidence boost for the Chennai-based player.If he continues to surprise, particularly with the white pieces, he stands to reap the rewards in the coming games.In the last world championship match that he won, Liren was trailing thrice but came back to even the scores against Ian Nepomniachtchi of Russia. The only time he went ahead was on the final day when the tiebreaker decided the fate of the title. —*PTI*

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

Alexis Mac Allister, celebrates after beating Real Madrid 2-0 during the Champions League match between Liverpool and Real Madrid at Anfield Stadium PHOTO: PTI

Liverpool shines, dumping Real Madrid down the table

LIVERPOOL, 28 NOV

Liverpool are the only team with a perfect record in this season's Champions League after beating title-holders Real Madrid 2-0 in their heavyweight clash on Wednesday, with last season's runners-up Borussia Dortmund among the night's other winners. The showdown at Anfield saw Real attempting to extend a run of eight games unbeaten against Liverpool. However, Arne Slot's Premier League leaders were too strong, with Alexis MacAllister putting them ahead early in the second half.

No one felt the embarrassment of Madrid's 2-0 loss at Anfield more than Kylian Mbappé, the superstar added in the offseason by the storied club that also was European champion against Liverpool in the finals of 2022 and 2018.

Only Liverpool has started the new Champions League format with five wins and first-year coach Arne Slot's team is two points clear of Inter Milan. Barcelona is third, trailing Liverpool by three points. —*PTI*

Mbappe needs support: Ancelotti

Madrid coach Carlo Ancelotti said afterward the star forward was going through a "difficult moment" just months after he joined the record 15-time European champion. "We've got to give him our support and love and he will soon be fine," Ancelotti said as he faced multiple questions from Spanish reporters about Mbappe's form. "It could be a lack of confidence maybe.

Team India meets Australian PM, Rohit speaks in parliament

CANBERRA, 28 NOV

Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese on Thursday hosted a reception for the traveling Indian cricket team PHOTO: PTI

Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese on Thursday hosted a reception for the traveling Indian cricket team for the PM's XI at Manuka Oval this week against an amazing Indian side," the Prime Minister posted on X after the meeting at the Australian parliament.

The PM's XI led by Jack Edwards also called on Albanese. Cricket diplomacy is a part of India-Australia relations.

of the Border-Gavaskar Trophy in Perth.

Following the protocol, India skipper Rohit Sharma introduced all his teammates to Albanese, who praised heroes of the first Test including Jasprit Bumrah and Virat Kohli.

"Anthony Albanese @ AlboMP Big challenge ahead

Iga Swiatek PHOTO: X

IGA SWIATEK ACCEPTS 1 MONTH SUSPENSION OVER TMZ USE

LONDON, 6 JUNE

Five-time Grand Slam champion Iga Swiatek accepted a one-month suspension after testing positive for the banned substance trimetazidine, a heart medication known as TMZ, the International Tennis Integrity Agency announced Thursday.

Swiatek failed an out-of-competition drug test in August, and the ITIA accepted her explanation that the result was unintentional and was caused by the contamination of a nonprescription medication, melatonin, that Swiatek was taking for issues with jet lag and sleeping.

It was determined her level of fault was "at the lowest end of the range for no significant fault or negligence," the ITIA said.

This is the second recent high-profile doping case in tennis: The top-ranked man, Jannik Sinner, failed two tests for a steroid in March and was cleared in August, right before the start of the U.S. Open, which he went on to win for his second Grand Slam title of the season.

Swiatek is a 23-year-old from Poland who was ranked No. 1 most of the past two seasons but is now at No. 2. She won the French Open in June for her fifth major championship and took home a bronze medal at the Paris Olympics in early August. —*PTI*

MARCO MAKES HISTORY AS SL BUNDLED OUT FOR LOWEST TOTAL

NEW DELHI, 28 NOV

Marco Jansen

South African star all-rounder Marco Jansen produced a bowling effort that will go down in the history books as he wreaked havoc on the Sri Lankan batting unit on the second day of the first Test match at the Kingsmead Stadium in Durban.

After the home team was bowled out for 191 in the first innings, South Africa came out to the field under pressure.

However, the left-arm pacer was at his brilliant best and took seven wickets in just 6.5 overs as Sri Lanka was bowled out for just 42 in 13.5 overs.

Sri Lanka registered their lowest score in Test cricket history. Their innings was also the second shortest ever by any team in the world.

Jansen took seven wickets in his spell of 6.5 overs (41) and dismissed Pathum Nissanka, Angelo Matthews, Kamindu Mendis, Dhananjaya de Silva, Prabath Jayasuriya, Vishwa Fernando, and Asitha Fernando. By his incredible spell, Jansen equaled the world record for the fastest seven-wicket haul. He is the first player in 120 years to take seven wickets in an innings in less than seven overs. The only other player to achieve the same was Australia's Hugh Trumble, who took seven wickets while conceding 28 runs in 6.5 overs against England in 1904 at the Melbourne Cricket Ground (MCG).

Marco Jansen 7/13 6.5 41 South Africa vs Sri Lanka 2024

Hugh Trumble 7/28 6.5 41 Australia vs England 1904

Monty Noble 7/17 7.4 56 Australia vs England 192

—*Agencies*

MANDAVIYA'S TAKE

'India can be in top 50 FIFA rankings in 10 years'

NEW DELHI, 28 NOV

The top brass of the AIFF, including its president Kalyan Chaubey, met Sports Minister Mansukh Mandaviya on Thursday PHOTO: PTI

India can break into the top 50 in the FIFA rankings, Sports Minister Mansukh Mandaviya said on Thursday, according to a release issued by the All India Football Federation (AIFF).

The top brass of the AIFF, including its president Kalyan Chaubey, met Mandaviya on Thursday to brief him on the existing AIFF-FIFA Academy in Odisha and the plan to build additional four such facilities in different zones.

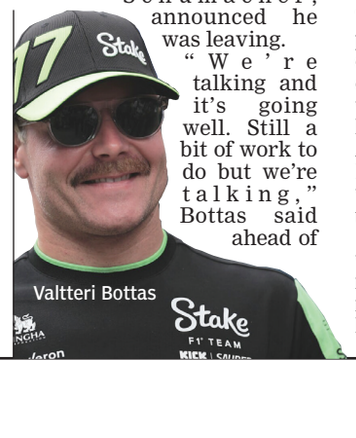
"An elaborate plan has to be chalked out and put in place for execution so that India can reach a FIFA ranking below 50 in the next ten years," Mandaviya was quoted as saying in the AIFF release.

"India boasts one of the largest pools of young talent globally. The focus should be on grassroots, talent identification. They should be nurtured along with coach development which will be pivotal for the sports growth." The FIFA rankings began in 1992 and the Indian men's football team's best ranking was 94, achieved in February 1996. The team has broken into the top 100 on very few occasions.

In the latest FIFA chart issued on Thursday, the Indian football team is ranked 127th, two spots down from the earlier October list. Japan, Iran, Korea, and Australia, the regular Asian countries in the World Cup, are ranked at 15th, 18th, 23rd and 26th respectively in the latest rankings. After the meeting, which also discussed the importance of coach development, the minister assured the AIFF of all possible support for the development of the sport in India. —*PTI*

Valtteri Bottas nears return to Mercedes

LUSAIL, 30 OCT



Valtteri Bottas

Valtteri Bottas says he is nearing an agreement to return to Mercedes as its reserve driver for next year after Mick Schumacher, son of seven-time champion Michael Schumacher, announced he was leaving.

"We're talking and it's going well. Still a bit of work to do but we're talking," Bottas said ahead of this weekend's Qatar Grand Prix.

Bottas won 10 Formula 1 races over five seasons at Mercedes as Lewis Hamilton's teammate from 2017-21 but hasn't scored a point this season with Sauber.

Bottas added he still needs to "finalize some things" on a possible return but feels he could be a mentor to 18-year-old Andrea Kimi Antonelli, who will partner George Russell at Mercedes next year. Antonelli is stepping up from Formula 2 to replace Hamilton when the British driver heads to Ferrari in 2025.

If I end up there, I think I would have a lot to give for a rookie driver who has not raced in Formula 1 yet," Bottas said. —*PTI*